PENELOPES Web:

Wherein a Christall Myrror of fæminine perfection *represents to the view of euery one* those vertues and graces, which more curiously beautifies the mynd of women, then eyther sumptuous Apparell, or Iewels of inestimable valew: the one buying fame with honour, the other breeding a kynd of delight, but with repentance.

In three seuerall discourses also are three especiall vertues, necessary to be incident in euery vertuous woman, pithely discussed: namely Obedience, Chastitie, and Sylence: Interlaced with three seuerall and Comicall Histories.

By *Robert Greene* Maister of Artes in Cambridge

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit vtile dulci.

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To the Right Honorable and vertuous his very good Ladie and *Mistresse, the Ladie Margaret* Countesse of Cumberland: and to the no lesse *Honourable and vertuous the Ladie Anne* Countesse of Warwicke: *Robert Greene* wisheth encrease of Honor and Vertue.

SOcrates (Right Honorable) being forced by the Athenians to send presents to Apollo, offered not vp, as others did, the superfluitie of wealth, but the Ænigmaes of Hermes Tresmegistus, yeelding this reason, that Apollo was not poore but wise. Achilles beautified the Temple of Pallas with Speares and Helmets, in that the Goddesse was patroneesse of Souldiers. Dyanas present was a Bow: And I by chance finding so precious a monument as the VVeb of Penelope, the only trophee of her chastitie, was perswaded to bestowe it vpon your Honors, as vpon two Ladies, whose vertues deserues among the best the

patronage of such a famous antiquitie. For if trueth be the daughter of tyme, and tyme the Heralt that best imblazeth affections: the report that the Gretians made of the Princesse of Ithaca, may seeme but a fiction compared with the fame of your Ladiships vertuous resolutions: which are such and so rare, as your very enemies (if you haue any) are forced maugre their teeth to bee true discouerers of your vertues. Homer penned his Odissea comprehẽding the life of Ulisses because he was wise. And I (may it please your Ladiships) haue attempted the discourse of Penelopes VVeb, for that she was chast, that as diuers reading the Poets works did imitate his wisedome and spoke well of his pollicie: so some by glancing at this toy may take a president of her chastitie, and giue thankes to your Honours, whose chast and vertuous life brought this worke to light. But some may obiect that Homers pen deawd forth such sugred eloquence, as beseemed the discourse of Ulisses trauailes: whereas my harsh style and methode makes the VVeb that of it selfe was as soft as the Seres wooll, be as rough as Goates hayre. I confesse my fault, and therfore by custome clayme pardone of course: yet thus farre dare I answere for my self; that although Demosthenes had a Plaudite for

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his Oration because it was curious: yet Nemius got the sentence for the trueth of his playne tale. Penelope her selfe was more chast then eloquent. Virgill was seene to haue Ennius in his hand. The Romain Ladies spurned at the sweete verses of Ouid, when they read ouer the Satyrs of Juuenall. And I hope your Ladiships wil vouchsafe of Penelopes VVeb, at least for the vertue of the woman that first wrought it, though the Cloathworkers arte haue giuen it so bad a glosse. Damydas caused his Parrat to pearke vnder a Dragon of brasse to defend it frō the Vultures tyranny: and I shrowde this simple worke vnder your Honors patronage, that th. enuious, whose tungs cut like Swords, may like the Serpent feare to offend that hearb, whereon the beames of the Sunne doth rest. Thus hoping your Ladiships will for Penelopes sake vouchsafe of such a homely present, though otherwise vnworthy the patronage of such Honorable personages, I commit your honors to the almightie.

Your Ladiships in all duetifull seruice to commaund, Robert Greene.

TO THE GENTLE-MEN READERS HEALTH.

SO oft (Gentlemen) haue I relyed vpon your courteſie, and found you ſo fauorable, that ſtill I aduenture to preſent what I write to your iudgementes, hoping as my intent is to pleaſe all, if it might bee without offence, ſo I ſhalbe pardoned of al, though preſuming to farre: It may be the forehead is not alwayes a true heralt of affections, neither the rules of Phiſiognomie infallible principles: for they which ſmiled at the *Theatre* in Rome, might aſſoone ſcoffe at the rudeneſſe of the *Scene*, as giue a Plaudite at the perfection of the action, and they which paſſe ouer my toyes with ſilence, may perhappes ſhrowde a miſlike in ſuch patience, if they do, yet ſoothing my ſelfe in the hope of their courteſies, I ſleepe content like *Phidias* in myne owne follies, thinking all is well, till proofe telles me the contrarie. I was determined at the firſt to haue made no appeale to your fauorable opinions, for that the matter is womens prattle, about the vntwiſting of Penelopes Web. But conſidering that *Mars* wil ſometime bee prying into *Venus* papers, and gentlemen deſirous to heare the parlie of Ladies, I thought rather to write a lyne to much, and ſo be counted forward, then by leauing out one title, incurre your diſpleaſures, and ſo be iudged froward: but whatſoeuer I haue done or written, I onely deſire for my paynes your fauorable acceptance, and ſo wiſh to you, as to my ſelfe, to liue fortunate, and dye happy.

Yours to vſe, Robert Greene.

To the Courteous and Courtly Ladies of England.

AFter that (Gentlewomen) I had finiſhed this Work of Penelopes VVeb and was willed to commit it to the Preſſe, I fell to parlie with my ſelfe whether I ſhould ſtay it as Appelles did Venus picture, halfe vnfiniſhed in the Printers fourmes: or thruſt it out as Myſon did a ragged table beſcratcht with a Penſell. Appelles was froward, and Myſon too forward, both faultie, and euery man hath his folly. It may be ſome will thinke me of Antiſthenes faction, that layed platfourmes of euery mans life, & yet the Philoſopher was more wiſe in his precepts then wary of his owne gouernement: and count me very œconomycall that ſeeke to ſet downe the duetie of a wife, and to deliuer principles to ſuch a purpoſe. If I haue intermedled to farre it is (Gentlewomen) in diſcouering the vertues of your ſex, not in cenſuring ſeuerely of your actions: for I preſent but the vieWe of thoſe vertues that naturally are, or incidently ought to bee as well in virgins that ſacrifice to Veſta, as in wiues that

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make ſecrete vowes to Lucyna. I reprehend not, as one thinking all generally to bee vertuous, but perſwade, as one wiſhing perticularly euery one ſhould liue well and dye better. If any that are enuious grudge at my doing, I ſtraight for refuge flye to your good words, which I count as a ſufficient defenſory againſt ſuch as loue to backbyte. Committing therfore my Booke to your patronage, leaſt the gates being to bigge for the Cittie, the Mountayne ſhould ſeeme to ſwell and bring forth a Mouſe, I wiſh you all ſuch happie ſucceſſe as you can deſire and I imagine.

Robert Greene.

Penelopes Web.

When as the ſtately Citie of Troy was ſacke by the Grecians, and all the princely bꝛode of Pryamus either vtterly extinguiſhed by ỹ ſwoꝛd, oꝛ fatally exiled the place of their natiue reſidence: Vliſſes the Pꝛince of Ithaca who had remayned ten yeeres at the ſiege, reſolued to leaue the confines of Aſia, and to returne to the gouernment of his owne Monarchie: but eſpecially to ſee the miſtreſſe of his thoughts chaſt Penelope, frō whom theſe bꝛoyles had ſo long frowardly detayned him: thinking as it was the part of a friend to accompanie Menelaus in reuenge, ſo it was the duetie of a huſband by ſmall delay to bewꝛay his affection: that it was the office of a Pꝛince as well to ſtudie with Pallas, as to cꝛye Alarum with Mars: that as great honoꝛ did dedepend in the Scepter as in the Swoꝛd, that the gréene Lawrel in the Senate houſe was as pleaſing an obiect to the eye, as glittering armour in the field: Conſideration, the pꝛeuenter of had Iwiſt, tyed him ſo to the perfoꝛming of theſe foꝛenamed pꝛemiſſes, that cauſing his weather beaten ſhippes to be warped out of the Hauen aſſoone as they were made theight, rigged and trimmed, able to bꝛoke winde and weather, he hoyſed ſaile and thꝛuſt into the mayne, conuerting his courſe toward Ithaca: but Foꝛtune the enemie to pꝛoſperous reſolutions, willing to bewꝛay her ſelfe, hauing commiſſion from angry Neptune to ſhewe her inconſtancie, kept him ſtill from the end of his deſires, I meane Penelope: who remayning ſtill in the Court of Ithaca, foꝛ that Nature had made her beautifull by a ſuperficiall gloꝛie of well pꝛopoꝛtioned lineaments, and vertue had made her wiſe by ayming after fame with well oꝛdered actions: theſe two perfections the ſpeciall friends to fancie, armed with the long abſence of Vliſſes and with many rumoꝛs of his death, bꝛought al the Péeres of Ithaca to become ſuitoꝛs to Penelope. She whom Loue had

arrested for a subiect, but neuer brought to any seruile obedience, whom the Idea of Vlisses printed in her thoughts, had resolued to dye the wife of so good a Prince, refused their proffers, & with the warrant of her chastitie sought to appease their humorous perswasions. But the Noble men whom delay and tyme had made impatient of denyall, fell into flat termes and craued an answer. Penelope seeing that fortune had conspyred her mishap, by breeding such a restlesse importunitie in her woers, was driuen to seeke a knot in a Rish, and with pollicie to preuent that which the honest and honorable pretence of her chastitie was not able to defend. She therefore beguyling time with labour, hauing begun a webbe wherein she spent the day to keepe her selfe from idlenesse, knowing that *Otia si tollas periere cupidinis arcus*, gaue answer, that when her worke was finished she would make a choyce of some one of them for her husband. The Noble men who knew that as the worke was not great the dated tyme could not be long, contented themselues with this replye, which somewhat eased the mynd of Penelope: but when she fell into consideration with her selfe that the longest Sommer hath his Autumne, the largest sentence his Period, and the greatest labour his performance, she began to be melancholie till Loue had learned her a shift to make her worke endlesse, by vntwisting as much in the night as she woue in the day: this pollicie put in practise, (for that the night the friend to sweete and golden sleepes grudged that her benefites should bee despysed by the restlesse labour of such a pollitick huswife) she determined accompanied with her Nurse and two Maydes to passe away the tyme in parle, thinking thus both to further her content, and procure payne to bee mittigated by such pleasing delights: Seeing therefore that her Nurse began to nodde and her Maydes to wincke, she wakened them out of their dreames with this merrie chat. I can but smile (Nurse) to see how tyme maketh a distinction of ages by affections, and the disposition of the sences followes truely the temperature and constitution of their bodies, as a particuler instance makes manifest: for the tyme of the night (growing to rest) summons both you and my Maydes to sleepe: yet though the affect

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is all one the effects are diuers: for age whom nature hath stored with imperfection and disease, and therefore freed from the care of disquieted thoughts, teacheth the sences by the desire of sléepe how the number of your yeeres are dated vnto death: that with Antisthenes wee may say, how the bed resembleth the graue, and ỳ closing of the sences the dissoluing of life: my Mayds whō youth perswades vnto rest, and want of care, moues that the blacke Ore neuer troade on their feete, onely cares how to serue tyme: for that no other care hath yet bitten them by the héele, and so resoluing their mynds in quiet by such content, seekes to pleasure the sences by sweete slumbers: but I poore soule whom fortune hath set as a subiect whereon to worke the variable poynts of her inconstancie, finde my sences so countermanded with disquieted thoughts, as desire of content drawes mée into a labe-rinth of restlesse passions.

Eubula one of her Maydes that was most familiar with her Lady, made this prettie and pithie reply: I remember (Madame) that Phidias, drawing the counterfaite of youth, figureth labour as the taskmaister of his actions, & ease as the paymaister of his deserts: meaning as I can coniecture by the Embleame, that as it behoueth youth to spend the day in worke, whereby to auoyde the sugred snares that ydlenesse layeth to intrap the sences: so the guerdon for such forward indeuours is to consume the night in sweete and quiet slumbers, least the vytall spirits ouercharged with too much labour, should either grudge at too sore an impost, or els fall to inconuenience by ouerlong toyle and watchings: Extremitie is euer a vyce, too much in euery thing is hurtful, and the greatest prodigalitie is the expence of the eye: I meane not (Madame) in gazing wantonly, but in watching ouer niggardly: which when I consider how prodigall your honour is in this poynt, I cannot but (as euer I haue done) meruaile at your wisdome and vertue, so now to wonder at your loue and constancie: forthinking with my selfe that your Grace is seated in a Throne of Maiestie, adorned with a Scepter and a Dyadem, honored with the possession of a Kingdome and ỳ tytle of a Quéene, rich, beautifull, and young, the very aduocates of vanitie: and seeing

that the affection your Highnesse beares to Vlisses, the loue to your Husband, the vowe to your Lord, though in long absence still qualifies the forenamed pleasures with the sweet dewe of a modest chastitie: I must (Madame) without flatterie say, that in requitall of such constant affection, the Gods in iustice must crowne you with immortalitie, and the world reward you with fame and honour.

In deede quoth Vygenia (for so was her second mayd called) when I see maiestie a contented copartner with labour, and a resolute farewell to ease: the chosen companyon to a Queene, I cannot thinke but loue is a great Lord, that in a womans affections worketh such straunge effects. Take heede quoth Ismena (which was the last and youngest of the three) that in this word loue, you deceiue not your selfe: for there is an Amphibologicall Equiuocation in it, which drowneth ỳ hearers oft in a labirinth of perplexed conceipts. As how quoth Penelope, let vs heare you make this distinction? Ismena that was young and very quicke witted, willing to content her Ladies humour by beguyling the night with prattle, applying as well her fingers to the web as her tongue to the tale, went forward thus in her description. Although (Madame) experience hath not taught me to set downe the diuers effects of Loue, yet the Phisition by reading oft knoweth the nature of the Simple as well as the Gardiner that planteth it: & he which seeth Fortune standing on a Globe, may iudge she is fickle though he cryes not her inconstancie: many speak of the Crocodyles teares that neuer felt her deceipts, and diuers condemne Diogenes for a Cynick that saw not his Tub: The Shoomaker corrected Appelles picture, yet he knewe not the vse of the Pencell: and I may by your honors patience talke of Venus Temple that neuer smelt the fume of her Sacrifice: but to say what I haue heard, thus to the matter. Anacreon, Menander, and Ouid, with others, who were studious in this amorous Philosophy, haue as they set downe principles, so penned downe precepts, whereby the fond and variable effects of loue is manifestly decyphered, calling it by the name of a God, as vnder that title bewraying the forceable efficacie that by a predominant

minant qualitie it doth infuse into humaine mynds: otherwhiles a Furie, as discouering the sorrowes, griefes, and disquiets that proceeded from such a furious humour, paynting Cupid blynd, as noting the self conceipt in choyce, like a little boye, as figuring small gouernment not leueled by the proportion of reason, winged, as absolutely pourtraying inconstant and fickle passions of Louers, whose thoughts are variable, whose ioyes are momentarie, like to the shadowes which Iuno presented to the Giants, bringing forth like the Ceader trées fayre leaues but no fruites, and as the Date hauing soft ryndes, but within stones as hard as steele: This loue (Madame) presented by Venus as an inueagle obiect, no sooner entreth the eye but he pearceth the heart, not accompanied with vertue to perswade, but armed with the outward hew of beautie to constrayne, which what effect so euer ensueth, wageth at last sorowe and repentance: Such was the loue of Dydo to Æneas, that seeing the curious forme of the dissembling stranger, through too ouer hastie affection did both ruynate herselfe and her Kingdome. Ariadna by crediting the sweete tales of Theseus, Medea of Iason, Phillis of Demophon, and infinite other, which entring into this passion runs headlong after endlesse repentance.

This loue is like the Baaran Leafe which séene pleaseth, but touched pearseth the skinne, this loue is that which ouerruling yong heads, sotteth the sences, dulleth the wittes, hindereth quiet, and maketh a passionate confusion in the mynd of man called by the title of loue, which in deede is mere lust and vanitie: whereas true and perfect loue hath his foundation vppon vertue onely, ayming at the inward perfection of the mind, not at the outward complexion of the body, which decreaseth not but increaseth with time vniting the hearts with such strickt leages of amitie, that it accounteth all labour a pleasure, to shewe endlesse desire by effects, as Madam to inferre your self for an instance, who not possessed with this fond furie which men faine to come from Venus, but that setled fancie which wée are sure proceedes from vertue, although the Prince Vlisses hath tenne yeeres bene absent at the sieege of Troy, and repoyt in this space hath made sundrie and

vncertaine tales of his death: although the stately Pallace of Penelope hath swarmed with ỳ Lords of Ithaca, thinking by sundry assaultes to make shipwracke of loue: yet hath affection, armed with vertue, so grounded the mynd from wauering so much as in thought, that neither respecting their youth, beautie, nor riches, your highnes spareth no paynes, as proofe makes manifest, still to remayne the constant wife of Vlisses: Such was the loue of Lucrece, that Tarquine in the absence of hir Husband found her selfe not idle, thereby to intertaine pleasure, but sitting amongst hir maids breaking of woll, by such huswifery to auoyde the alurements of vanitie: such was the loue of the Romane Martina, that in the space hir Housebond Lentulus remained at the warres, she neuer was found from the Whéele, both these same hath chronicled with honour, & I am sure Madame the report of your chastitie, being once spred abroade, the Grecians are as prodigall in prayses as the Romanes, and blind Homer shall be as ready by his pen to make your chastitie immortall, as euer was any of their babling Poets. The olde Nourse, who for all hir nodding had geuen eare to this prettie prattle of the mayde, making her selfe at the prayses of Penelope, began to mumble out these wordes: Daughter, whether report or experience hath taught thee these principles of loue I will not be inquisitiue, but this I dare say, thy censure is as true as an Oracle, for in deede that is not loue which pearceth the eye, but which pleaseth the mind, not that is founded vpō the superficial sight of beautie, but vpō the touchstone of delight, which is vertue, such was the loue of Porcia to Brutus, who chose him not because he was faire, but for that he was wise, not leueling content by the outward shape, but by the inward substance, not setting downe the propertie of of affection as our gentlewomen doe now adayes that must haue their Housebands as beautifull as Adonis, as prowde as Narcissus, as fine as Clæto, as neate as may be, or els his Penny gets no Paternoster: whereas true loue inquireth if the man be vertuous, as Sulpitia did of Lentulus, if he be valiant, as Andromache did of Hector, if hée bee wise, as Hipperchia did of Crates the Philosopher: not if he be beautifull, as Helena did

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of Paris, if he be well proportioned, as Phædra did of Hippolitus, if he be rich, as Iphicla did of Cinnatus, for ẏ one is immortall, builded vpon vertue, the other momentarie, stayed vpon the goods of nature and fortune. Therfore Pittachus one of the seauen sages, considering ẏ in perfect loue there ought to be a sympathie of affections, setteth downe three kinds of mariages. The first of loue, the second of labour, the third of griefe. As touching the first, Themistocles tearmes it a charitable coniunction, vnitie and societie of them that are good, when the parties seeke not by a voluptuous desire to aime at pleasure, but by a vertuous intent to enioy the benefite of mutuall amitie: the mariage of labour is that which the Comicall Poet Plautus auoucheth to come from the fingers, not from the eares, by this allegorie, as I suppose, meaning that women like not by the report they heare of his vertue, but by the delite they take in feeling his treasures, rather desirous to haue goods without a man, then a man without goods, which Olimpias the mother of Alexander greatly hated, for when she heard that a noble woman of Macedonia had maried a rich fole, she banisht hir from the Court with this sharpe sentence. I like not hir that preferreth wealth before vertue: the second species of this *Genus*, is where bodely beautie and outward graces is onely regarded, where the linaments of the face, not the literature of the mind beareth palme, this momentarie affection tyeth the banes of mariage with the blades of a Leeke, and being plumed with times feathers falleth with euery dewe, for the least wrincle, the smalest mole, the littlest scarre, yea the winters frost or sommers sunne doth vtterly subuert and ruinate the deepest impression that beautie can insert vpon fantie, so that the tearme of such loue, if it scape these forenamed hazards, is yet dated but till age doth approch, whereunto well assenteth the Poet.

Forma bonum fragile est, quantumque accedit ad annos,
Fit minor & spacio carpitur ipsa suo.

The third degree of the mariage of Labour, is when the parties are Hetherogenei: dissonant in manners, nature and age, where disparitie of yeeres hath set such a difference, as neither

time

time nor pretence of loue can euer be able to reconcile, where Decrepita senectus old age whom diseases hath tyed to ẏ Crouch, will now with the babe returne to the Cradle: that stoping to the graue by burden of ouer many yeres, wil yet offer a toothlesse Sacrifice to Venus for a young husband: this well may be called a mariage of Labour, where the maried couples so inequall in match are continually troubled with a spirit of dissention: for as the fower Elements are different in their properties, so are these disagreeing in their maners: the earth and ayre are not placed well in one ballance: the fire and water brookes not the selfe same limites: age and youth may conioyne in lawe but not in loue, sith the sanguine complexion of the one and the melancholie & saturnine constitution of the other, are alwaies in thoughts, affects, and desires opposite ex dyametro: so that by the opinion of Aristotle they be as it were immediat contraries: which Dyonysius the elder noted very well when seeing his mother palling old and ouer growne with age, desirous to marie a young stripling, tolde her that it was in her power to violate the lawes of Syracusa, but not the lawes of nature, this affirmeth Plato in his Androgina, & agreeth to the censure of Dionisius, affirming that marriage in ould Women is with the Giants *bellum gerere cum Dijs*, which the Romane Lady Valeria well noted, who alwayes had this saying in her mouth, that her Husband died to others, but liued to her for euer. And herein can I commend my good daughter Penelope, that hating such marriages of labour, doth intend both to liue and dye to Vlisses. May good Nourse quoth Penelope, lets heare your last distinction, I meane the mariage of greefe: tis Madame quoth she, where the old prouerb is fulfild, better one house troubled then two, I meane where a bad husband is coupled with a bad wife, where the one striueth to ouercome the other, not in vertuous actions, but in disquiet and murmurings. I cannot thinke (quoth Penelope) that there is any husband so bad, which the honest gouernment of his wife may not in time reformе, especially if she keepe those three speciall poynts that are requisite in euery woman, Obedience, Chastitie, and Silence, three such graces Nurse, as may reclayme

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the moſt graceleſſe huſband in the woꝛld: and becauſe my mayds are young, and may in tyme tꝛye the foꝛtune of mariage, we will this night diſcourſe of this poynt, to diſcouer the effects and efficacie of Obedience: which (foꝛ that I wil be firſt in this newe deuiſed diſputation) I will take in hand to diſcourſe of, that both we may beguyle the night with pꝛattle, and pꝛofite our mynds by ſome gwd and vertuous pꝛecepts.

The maides hearing their Lady in ſo gwd a vaine were glad, and theꝛefoꝛe ſetting their hands to the Web, and their eares to hir talke, Penelope began in this maner. Zenobia the wife of Radamyſius, King of Armenia, being demanded of a Lady in hir Court, how ſhe pꝛocured her huſband ſo deꝛpely to loue her as he feared in any wiſe to offer her occaſion of diſpleaſure, anſwered, by fearing to diſpleaſe him, meaning that the chiefeſt point of wiſdome in a good wife is to make a conqueſt of her huſband by obedience. Ariſtides the true and perfect Juſticiarie of his time, cauſed the poꝛtraiture of a woman figured on her knees, to be caried beſoꝛe ẏ Bꝛydes at their eſpouſals, to ſignifie that they meant now to obey & ſubmit, not to rule oꝛ command, foꝛ quoth he, ſuch fond and fantaſtick women as make thoyſe of effeminate Huſbands, thereby to challenge a ſouerayne ſuperioritie ouer them, may rightly bee compared to thoſe pꝛeſumptuous foles that had rather be maſters of blind men, then ſeruants to the diſcrẽte and learned, which cauſed Plato in his Androgina to ſay that a wiſe woman ought to thinke her huſbands maners the lawes of her life, which if they be good, ſhe muſt take as a foꝛme of her actions, if they bee bad, ſhe muſt bꝛoke with patience: His reaſon is thus. As a loking glaſſe oꝛ Chꝛiſtall though moſt curiouſly ſet in Ebonie, ſerueth to ſmall purpoſe if it doth not liuely repꝛeſent the pꝛopoꝛtion and lineaments of the face inſpicient, ſo a woman, though rich and beautiful, deſerueth ſmal pꝛayſe oꝛ fauour, if the courſe of her life be not directed after her huſbands compaſſe. And as ẏ Mathematicall lines which Geometricians doe figure in their carrecters, haue no motiõ of themſelues, but in the bodyes wherin they are placed, ſo ought a wife to haue no pꝛoper noꝛ peculiar paſſion oꝛ affection, vnleſſe fra-

med after the special dispositiõ of her husband: For, to crosse him with contraries, as to frowne when he setteth him selfe to mirth, or amidst his melancholie to shewe her selfe passing merrie, discouereth either a fond or froward will opposite to that honorable vertue of Obedience. But sayth Antisthenes, some wiues resemble the nature of the Moone, which the further she is remoued from the Spheare of the Sunne is the more radiant, and the nearer she approacheth to his beames the more eclipsed and obscured: so ỳ longer ỳ distance is betweene them & their husbands the better there, when in place they are euer sorrowfull and pensiue: which crabbed constitution is the well of endlesse disquiet, whereof springeth a peculiar and pestilent enormitie: for the troublesome conuersation of a wife that spendeth the day in discorde and the night in braules, were she as chast as Hipsicratea, as wise as Sulpitia, as rich as Panthea, yet it darkeneth these forenamed vertues and makes her odious: whereas there is no greater perswasion to allay the chollericke humour and froward disposition of men then Obedience: for sayth Theocritus, a good wife should vse the custome in her house that the Persians did in the warres: for when their enemies made any inuasion either by skirmish, Camizado or maine battell, if they rusht vpon ỳ pykes with any clamours, the Persians receiued them with silence, but if they assaulted with furie they ioyned forces with lowde Alarums: so should a wise woman when she sees her husband in choller appease him with pacience, and when he is quiet then seeke to perswade him with reasons. Whereof Ariosto in a sonnet hath this censure englished thus.

The sweete content that quiets angrie thought:
The pleasing sound of howshold harmonie:
The Phisicke that alayes what furie wrought:
The huswifes meanes to make true melodie,
Is not with Simple, Harpe or worldly pelfe,
But smoothly by submitting of her selfe.
Iuno *the Queene and mistresse of the Skye,*
When angry Ioue *did threat her with a frowne,*
Causde Ganymede *for* Nectar *fast to hye*

With

With pleasing face to wash such choller downe:
For angry Husbands findes the sooneſt ease,
When sweete submission choller doth appeaſe.
The Lawrell that impales the head with praiſe,
The Iemme that decks the breaſt of Iuorie:
The pearle thats orient in her ſiluer raies:
The Crowne that honors Dames with dignitie:
No Saphier, Gold, greene Bayes nor margarit,
But due obedience worketh this delight.

With theſe verſes I conclude, that there is no better thing praiſe worthie in a woman then Obedience, which a Catalogue of infinite examples is able to make manifeſt. Cornelia the wife of Gracchus falling at firſt in diſgrace with her Huſband, not for that ſhe wanted vertue, but that the courſe of his vnbrideled youth led him to a furious ſuperiority of the young Lady, which ſhe countermanded with ſuch ſubmiſſion and dutifull obedience, as ſhe reclaymed that by her owne gouernment, which the Senators by threats could not performe. Emilia the wife of Scipio the African, although ſhe was of more honourable parentage then her huſband, being diſcended from the auncient and princely line of the Emilij, ſeeing how he had her in contempt and violating the Nuptiall bed fell in loue with her handmayd: yet concealed the matter in moſt ſecret maner, & fulfilled in euery thing his commaund with ſuch obedience, that Scipio repenting his former follies, reconciled himſelf to her vntil his death: inſomuch that Emilia after her Huſbands funerall, to ſhewe the true platforme of loue and obedience, maryed the mayd to one of her freemen with a great dowrie. But eſpecially let the obedience of Octauia ſiſter to Auguſtus and wife to Anthonie be a ſufficient preſident for our purpoſe: who notwithſtanding the iniurie her Huſband offered by preferring a Quéene before her, neither ſo young, fayre, nor vertuous, yet bare ſuch entyre affection to Anthonie, that neither the intreatie of her brother, the perſwaſions of her kindred, nor the remembrance of the iniurie could extinguiſh the leaſt ſparke of her loue. This vertuous Princeſſe hearing that her Huſband was to make warre againſt the Parthi-

ans, prouiding Soldiours, money and Munition, toke her iorney as farre as Athens, where she receiued letters from Anthonie to returne backe to Rome, which she with great obedience perfourmed; sending him al the forenamed necessaries, although she perfectly knewe that Cleopatra was with him in the field: But when the warres betwixt him and Augustus were ended, he sent straight to commaunde Octauia that she should depart from his house, which she did so obediently, that Rome after her death would haue erected an Image in her praise, but that Augustus would not suffer it, keeping Anthonies children that he had by his first wife, with such care and diligence, as it did well note to the world her loue and obedience. To confirme which more at large, I will rehearse a pleasant Historie.

Penelopes Tale.

SAladyne the Soudan of Ægipt, who by his prowesse had made a generall conquest of the South-east part of ỳ world, toke to wife Barmenissa the onely daughter and heire of the great Chan, who amongst sondry suitors not inferiour to him in parentage and progenie, yet made such a carefull choyce of this yong Ægiptian Prince, not for his beauty (for that Nature had denyed him that fauour) but for his vertue (sith he was wise and valiant) that imprinting the perfection of his mynd with a deepe insight into the deepest place of her heart, and sealing the knot of fancie with ỳ signet of mariage, she neuer so much as in thought crost him with any discourtesie: yet for that men are the subiects of Fortune and therfore variable, and the true disciples of tyme, and therefore momentarie, he began to loathe that in the fruite which he loued in the bud, and to spurne at that in the sadle which he secretly vsed in the cradle, repaying the faith of Barmenissa, not with flatterie to inueagle her, but with foule language the better to manifest his hate: which although Nature forbad her to brooke, yet obedience the Herald ỳ best imblazeth loue, taught

her

her that against such sorrowe there was no better salue then patience: that reuenge in a woman was not to bee executed by the hand, but by the heart, and yet not with rigour but with clemencie, persisting in this opinion. Olynda the Concubine which Saladyne so greatly loued sent a Letter to this effect.

Olynda to Saladyne health.

IF the inward affects of the mynd bee manifested by outward effects, or the browe the bashfull bewrayer of secretes, and yet the true discoueter of thoughts, may be credited, the Emperour of Ægipt in his loues resembleth the Pyne tree, whose leaues remaine in one colour but one day: Well might the censures of wise Clarkes haue bin caueats of my likely misfortune: for they say Princes affections as they are glorious so they are brittle: that the fauour of Kings hangs in their eye lids readie with euery wincke to be wyped out: that as they are full of Maiestie and aboue law, so they are full of inconstancie because without lawe: this which other spoke by proofe now I alledge by experience: for your Highnesse abridgeth me of my wonted allowance, not onely in expence but in lookes, so that I account that day happie when Saladyne but glanceth at Olinda. The mistris of my mishap is thy iniurious wife Barmenissa, to whō I wish thy ilfortunes and my miseries: she with a fayned obedience seeketh to inueagle thée with a conceipt of her loue, who if she did loue, could not content, for she wants the eye pleasure, beautie: thou tickled with an inconstant humour doest listen to the melodie of the old Syren, whose necke shadowed with wrinckles affords but bad harmonie: Keepe not (Saladyne) fire and water in one hand: in running with the Hare holde not with the Hound: beare not both a Sword and an Olyue. Paris gaue sentence but on Venus part, affection brooketh no diuision: therefore if thou loue Olynda, hate Barmenissa: followe the example of Anthonie, who after his choyce of thy Countrywoman neuer fauoured Octauia: tis beautie that merites a Crowne, and as well would the Diadem of Ægipt beseeme thy Lemons head as thy wiues:

the willes of Princes are lawes, their lookes death, their censures are peremptorie: Ægipt affoordeth confections and poysons, why then should Barmenissa liue to disquiet thee, to enuie mée, and to slaunder vs both: if not with her tongue, yet with the paynted shewe of her vertues. This perfourme without delay, or excuse if thou wilt bee counted the friend of Olynda. I want money, send me sixe thousand Aspers, though my counsaile be great my expences are small: And so farewell. Olynda.

THE King hauing receiued this Letter and throughly vewed the cõtents put it vp in his pocket, and through other vrgent affayres committed to obliuion the request of Olynda. A fewe daies passing, as Saladyne pulled out his Handkercher, by fortune he lost his Letter: which Barmenissa finding, after ẏ by the contents she perceiued how the King not only had alienated his mynd, but through perswasions intended her death, yet with cõstancie and patience, thinking to shewe her selfe honourably and obediently mynded in most extreme perrilles, she thought not by reuenge to make requitall of such treacherie, but by a bountifull courtesie to shewe her enemies how little she estéemed of their practizes: She therefore presently prouiding so many Aspers as Olynda sent for, conueyed them to her by a spéedie messenger, charging him vpon his life not onely to deliuer them, but to say that they came from the Souldan, least (as women oftymes, especially of her function, are peruerse) frowardnesse should more preuayle then necessitie. The messenger obeying the Princesse commaund, went in great haste and perfourmed his charge: but as he returned, the Souldan who was going thether, encountered him, and demaunding the cause of his iourney: the poore fellowe fearefull to be tript in a lye, tolde the King from poynt to poynt the effect of his message: first how the Quéene had found & read the Letter: thẽ how she sent him with the money, & gaue in charge he should say the Aspers were sent frõ the Souldan. Saladyne hearing this, let the messenger goe and went forward on his way, where discoursing the maner of the Quéenes reuenge to Olinda, it made her not onely not ashamed of her intent,

but

but alſo deſperat to go forward in her perſwaſiõs: ſo that before his departure, the Souldan was fully reſolued to depoſe the Quéene from all regall and princely dignitie, and to inueſt her with the Crowne and Dyadem: which reſolution in ſhort tyme toke effect: for ſummoning all his Nobilitie at the promontorie of Iapher to a Parliament vppon certaine Articles preferred againſt his wife, and confirmed by falſe witneſſes, ſhe was by generall conſent depoſed: and the ceremonie of her depoſition being finiſhed, and Olynda ſent for into the Parliament houſe, he pronounced theſe words.

It is no maruaile if you ſtand amazed (right mightie Princes of Ægipt) to ſee your King who was wont to craue your conſent in ſmall affayres: without your counſell now to begin a thing of ſuch importance, I meane a Parliament: But he that ſeeketh to haue his purpoſe vnpreuented muſt be ſecret and ſpéedie, leaſt either fortune or counſaile hinder his enterpriſe. Many things falles out betwene the cup and the lip, and daunger is alwaies a companion to delay. To take away therefore all occaſions of hinderance, I haue vpon the ſodaine aſſembled you, not only to heare what I can ſay, but without either doubt or denyall to confirme what I will ſay. Being diuorced from my quondam wife and your Quéene by lawe, although I am olde, yet not ſo ſtriken in age but that I can and muſt yéelde to affection: I intend, nay I will in deſpight of all men, take Olynda héere preſent to my wife, and before we depart from this Seſſion ſhe ſhalbe crowned Quéene. Coniecture doth aſſure me you will all greatly miſlike of the match, and grudge that your King ſhould marrie ſo low. But I charge you all in generall, and wiſh euery one that loueth his owne life, neither with counſaile nor reaſon to perſwade me from that I haue purpoſed: leaſt he incurre further daunger and my perpetuall diſpleaſure.

The Nobilitie, but eſpecially his ſonne Garinter of the age of twentie yeres, grudging at his mothers miſhap, and that ſuch a common Strumpet ſhould poſſeſſe her place, made furious by the force of nature, burſt out into this chollerick replye.

May it pleaſe your highneſſe (I feare to offend) if I ſay what

I should, and yet were loth to flatter in saying what I would not: but if I may haue free libertie to speake what I think, my verdit shall be sone giuen. I confesse that what pleaseth the father ought to content the sonne: and therefore I count the will of Saladyne a lawe to Garinter: yet as obedience wisheth a consent, so Nature willeth with a friendly denyall to diswade from things that offende not onely men, but þ are euen hatefull to the Gods. I say therefore that Saladyne should get more honour by eryling Olynda, not only from Babylon, but out of all the confines of Ægipt, then if he had obtayned more tryumphes then that inuincible Cæsar. No doubt your Grace shall sone, nay I feare to sone, finde my words to be true, that in hoping to get a swéete content you gayne a sower mislike: like to them which pleased with the colour of the trée Lotos, are poysoned assone as they taste of the Apples.

Barmenissa, hearing how sharply her sonne spoke vp the Emperour, with a modest countenance, as nothing grudging at the iniurie of fortune, at her last farewell gaue him this charge: Although sonne the lawe of nature willes thée to be partner of thy mothers misfortunes, yet the Gods, whose lawes are aboue nature, commaunds that thou gainsay not the Edict of thy father: For as Proclus the Academick affirmes, there is nothing which wee ought more to regard then duetie and obedience: the commaunde of the Father is not to bee limited by the conceipt of the child, for as their superiorítie is without proportion, so their wils ought to be without denials, first the frowne of a father (saith Epictetus) is like the eleuation of a Commet which foreshewes euer some fatall and finall ruine. Then Garinter offend not thy father in thought, least the gods grudging at thy secret disobedience plague thée with an open reuenge: further sonne, thou art his subiect, and he thy soueraine, what duetie is due to such a mightie potentate thou must by lawe and conscience offer vnto him: And seeing by the consent of the Ægiptian lawes I am deposed, and Olinda inuested with the regall crowne: if a mothers commaund may be a constraint to the sonne, I chardge thée that thou shewe her the same obedience that belongs to a Princesse,

and

and thy fathers wife. Philarkēs ꝑ ſonne of Pſamnetichus obeyed Rhodope, whom his father tayled from a common courtezan to a Princeſſe. Antiochus the ſonne of Demetrius builded ſtately Sepulchres for his fathers Concubines: Reuenge (ſonne) ought not to go in purple, but in white, and the ſalue for iniuries is not choller but patience: for myne owne part Garinter I ſet thee downe no precept but ꝑ which my ſelf meane to hould for a principle, and thou by imitating thy mothers actions, ſhewe thy ſelfe to be dutifull, which if thou performe, I will continually pray to the Gods for thy good, otherwiſe, if for my cauſe thou intend reuenge I with thy ill: & ſo wiſhing to thy father as to my ſouereigne, & to the Princeſſe as to one honored with a Diademe, I take my leaue at ꝑ Court, as wel content with my aduerſitie, for that it is ꝑ kings cõmaund, as euer I was with proſperitie: And with this the Princeſſe departed, leauing both her ſonne and the Nobles paſſing penſiue for her preſent diſgrace: The Souldan not ſatisfied with this iniurie, cauſed preſently Proclamation to be made, that the Princeſſe ſhould haue no reliefe, but what ſhe earned with her hands, that her ladies ſhould be labour, and her maintenance, no other then her owne indeuour could prouide: This Edict commaunded to be publiſhed, the King ſolempniſed his mariage with ſumptuous ſhowes and triumphes, and Garinter that he might ſhewe how carefull he was to obey his mothers laſt commaund, brought in Paſkes and comicall delightes to finiſh vp the ſolempnitie of the nuptials. The feſtiual time being paſt, Olinda puffed vp with a ſweete conceipt of her proſperitie, ſo ruled and ouerruled in her gouernment, vſing ſuch tyranny in words, and perſwading her husband to ſuch diſorderd actions, that ſhe generally fell in hate of all the people, in ſo much that the Souldan him ſelfe grudged at her ambitious preſumption: Well, leauing her to her follies, againe to the Lady Barmeniſſa, who fallen from a Crowne to a Cottage, and from a Scepter almoſt to a Scrip, ſtill ſalued her want with labour and her pouertie with patience, bearing as princely a mind in aduerſitie, as ſhe did in proſperitie, neither grudging at iniurie, nor gaping after reuenge, ſtayed thus vpon this vertuous foundation,

taking her worke in her hand (for the vse of her needle was her yerely reuenues) she walked out of her poore house towards the court, that she might by some one or other learne how her sonne behaued himselfe to the Emperour: Passing on poorely attyred, (for she chaunged her habite with her fortune) at last she came within sight of the Pallace, when as consideration of her former estate presented vnto her mynd a confused Chaos of sorrowfull and disquieted passions: so that sitting downe behinde a bush in a little Thicket she fell into these tearmes.

Vnhappie Barmenissa, why are the Destinies so inequall allotters of mishap as to appoynt thy youth, which to others is a pleasant spring of good fortune, to thee a frosty winter of mishap? Are the Starres so inequall in their cõstellation, or so incertaine in their influence, that Maiestie hath no priuiledge against miserie, nor the title of a Quéene no assurance of good hap? Is the seate of dignitie like the Chariot of Phœbus, whose whéeles chalenge not one minut of rest? Then (Barmenissa) say with Solon, Cressus is not happie before his death. Confesse with Amazias King of Ægipt, that ỹ prosperous successe of Policrates prognosticated some dyre euent: that Fortune standeth on the wethercocke of tyme, constant in nothing but in inconstancie: that no man is happie before his end, and that true felicitie consisteth in a contented life and a quiet death: for I see well, that to assigne happinesse to him which liues (considering the alteration that tyme and fortune presents with sondrie stratagemes) is to allot the reward of victorie before the battell bee fought. The greatest miserie of all, sayth Byas, is not to beare miserie, and that man is most happie (quoth Dionisius) that frõ his youth hath learned to bee vnhappie. Demetrius surnamed the Besieger, iudged none more vnhappie then he which neuer tasted of aduersitie: for that fortune accounts of them as abiects and vassalles of dishonour, whom she presents not as well with bitter pilles as sweete potions. Alluding to that saying of Plutarke, that nothing is euill that is necessarie, vnderstanding by this word, necessarie, whatsoeuer commeth to a wise man by fatall destinie: because, vsing patience in necessitie, he giueth a greater glory vnto vertue. Sith

then

then (Barmeniſſa) the fall from a Crowne ought to be no foyle to content, greaue not at Fortune, leaſt thy ſorrowe make her tryumph the greater: but beare aduerſitie with an honourable mynd, that the world may iudge thou art as well a Princeſſe in pouertie as in proſperitie: for Kings are not called Gods for that they weare Crownes, but that they are Lords ouer Fame and Fortune. Although theſe ſecrete meditations were perſwaſions vnto quiet, yet ſhe no ſoner caſt her eye to the Pallace, but ſhée was ouercharged with melancholie: to auoyde the which, taking her Néedle in her hand ſhe fell to worke, and hearing the prétie Birds recording their ſwéete and pleaſant note, ſhe warbled out this Madrygale.

Barmeniſſas Song.

The ſtately ſtate that wiſemen count their good:
The chiefeſt bliſſe that luls aſleepe deſire,
Is not diſſent from Kings and princely blood:
Ne ſtately Crowne ambition doth require.
For birth by fortune is abaſed downe,
And perrils are compriſde within a Crowne.

The Scepter and the glittering pompe of mace,
The head impalde with honour and renowne,
The Kingly throne, the ſeate and regall place,
Are toyes that fade when angrie fortune frowne.
Content is farre from ſuch delights as thoſe,
Whom woe and daunger doe enuy as foes.

The Cottage ſeated in the hollowe dale,
That fortune neuer feares, becauſe ſo lowe:
The quiet mynd that want doth ſet to ſale,
Sleepes ſafe when Princes Seates do ouerthrowe.
Want ſmyles ſecure, when princely thoughts do feele
That feare and daunger treads vpon their heele.

Bleſſe fortune thou whoſe frowne hath wrought thy good:
Bid farewell to the Crowne that ends thy care,

The happie fates thy sorrowes haue withstood,
By syning want and pouertie thy share;
For now content (fond fortune to despight)
With patience lowts thee quiet and delight.

Barmoenissa had no sooner ended her madrigale, but that she heard a great noyse, which at the first amazed her, but at the last she perceiued it to be the voyce of men: desirous therefore to bee a partner of their secrecie, she kept her self silent within the thicket, when she perceiued certaine of the nobles of Ægipt ẏ were retyred to that solitarie place to confer of the ambitious supremacie that Olinda vsed since her coronation, and amongst the rest one of the Lords, whose name was Egistus, burst forth into these tearmes.

Egistus Oration to the Lords of Egipt.

IT is not vnknowen (Right Honorable Lords of Egipt) not onely to vs, but to the whole Empire, how the king, seduced by the flattering allurements of a strumpet, hath not onely violated the lawe of our Gods, in prophaning the nuptiall Bed made sacred by the holy law of Matrimonie, but also the lawe of Egipt which forbiddeth diuorce without cause: but sith in a Monarchie the willes of Princes may abyde no checke, but their reasons (how soeuer vnreasonable) are ẏ principles that may not be infringed, it reacheth only for vs to complaine, but not to redresse: least ayming more at ẏ weale of our countrey thē our own liues, we set our rest on the hazard and so desperatly throw at all. First let vs consider that Saladyne the mightie Soudan of Ægipt, puffed vp with the highnesse of his Maiestie and number of his Territories subiect to his gouernment, hath bene so tyrannous to his Commons from his first Coronation, that vnlesse his immoderate pride and presumption had bin mittigated by the verteous clemencie of his wife, the burthen of his crueltie long time since

since had bene intollerable: but now hauing deposed that peerelesse Princesse, whose vertues made her famous and vs happie, and married a Concubine, whose vanities breedes her enuie and our mishap: we are to looke for no other euent but our particuler ill fortune, and the generall ruyne of the weale publicke. Then my Lords, least we should be spotted with the staine of ingratitude, in suffering the Princesse iniurie vnreuenged: and least wee should seeme to be borne more for our selues then our Countrey, let vs attempt the restitution of the Quéene, and the fatall ouerthrowe of the insolent Concubine, although death and daunger were the end of our enterprise: The plot my Lords I haue layd by inpoysoning her cup at the next Supper: but with this prouiso, that no intent of treacherie shall so much as in thought bee pretended to the person of our Soueraigne, whom next vnder the Gods we are bound to loue and reuerence. This my Lords is my purpose, whereto if you consent; I meane this night to put it in practise: otherwise to craue that my speeches may bee buryed in silence.

Egistus hauing ended his Oration, the Lords not only gaue their free consent, but also sware to be secret, and to be ayders in his defence, if any iniurie should be offered for his enterprise: and vpon this resolution they departed. Barmenissa (who all this while held herselfe close in the Couert) hauing heard their determination, was surprised with such sodaine ioye, that at last she burst forth into these speeches.

Now Barmenissa, thou seest that delay in reuenge is the best Phisicke: that the Gods are iust and haue taken thy quarrell as aduocates of thyne iniurie: now shalt thou see wrong ouerruled with patience, and the ruyne of thyne enemie with the safetie of thyne owne honour: tyme is the discouerer of mishap, and Fortune neuer ceaseth to streach her strings till they cracke: shame is the end of treacherie, and dishonour euer forerunnes repentance. Olympia hath soard with Icarus, & is like to fall with Phaeton: sooner are bruses caught by reaching too hye then by stooping too lowe: Fortune grudgeth not at them which fall, but Enuy bytes the which clymbes: now shall the Lords of Ægipt by reuenging

thyne enemie worke thy content: And why thy content Barmenissa? doth content hang in reuenge, or doth the quiet of the mind procede by the fall of an enemie? Seest thou not (fond woman) that the prosperitie of Olynda is the preseruing of thy glorie: that it is princely as wel to be faithfull as patient: that it is thine honour to put vp causeleslie iniurie, and her shame to heare of thy vnhappinesse: nay, what would Ægipt, yea the whole world say, (if by treacherie her bane be procured) but that it was thy trothlesse indeuour: so shalt thou lose more fame in a minute, thē thou shalt recouer in many yeeres: Then here lyes the doubt, eyther must I haue myne honour by her mishap, or els seeke the ruyne of my friends by discouering their pretence. Treacherie thou knowest Barmenissa, is not to be concealed: friends haue no priuiledge to be false: amitie stretcheth no further then the Aultar: Saladyne is thy Soueraine, she his wife, and therefore thy superiour: rather reueale their falsehode then ruinate thyne owne honor. The wife of Manlius Torquatus rauisht her sonnes head to be smit off for killing his enemie cowardly. Sempronia slewe her sonne for vttering speeches against the Senate. Kings are Gods, against whom vnreuerent thoughts are treacherie: The head that is impalled with a Crowne must be prayed for, not reuenged. Then Barmenissa, be rather ingratefull to thy friends then treacherous to thy Prince: rather see them dye then Olynda fall into such fatall daunger. And with this she stood in a dumpe, and being readie to goe forward in her former meditation, she espyed where the Soudan and the Empresse onely accompanied with her sonne and another Noble man came walking: Barmenissa willing to see how the world went, met the Soudan, and with a reuerent modestie both saluted him and the Empresse. Olynda (who sawe the quondam Quéene in this poore estate) smyling at her follie, asked her where she dwelt and how she did liue. I dwell Madame (quoth she) in a little Cottage adioyning to the Subburbs of the Cittie, where accompanyed with three friendly companyons, I passe the day in labour with quiet, and the night in securitie with sweete slumbers: Content sits at my doore, and armed at all poynts forbids eyther Enuie or Fortune entrance:

entrance: Frugalitie is my purſebearer, and Hunger the Cooke that aſſignes my dyet: Pouertie preſents me homely cheere, yet like a good Phiſition to make a perfect digeſtion, he ſauoreth all my diſhes with quiet. And Madame, although I want an imperiall Crowne, and other Crownes alſo: this lacke I finde frees mee from care, that I ſleepe more in the Cottage, then euer I ſlumbred in the Court. Then (quoth the Souldan) you worke for your liuing: Your Maieſtie knowes (quoth ſhe) that by parentage I am daughter to the great Chan of Tartaria, where my want was wealth, and my labour pleaſure and delight: yet he knowing that principalitie is no priuiledge againſt Fortune, and that the higheſt eſtate is no warrant againſt miſhap, learned me to vſe the Néedle and the Wheéle, that both I might eſchue idleneſſe in my youth, and (if the Deſtinies had ſo decréed) the better broke pouertie in my age. Perhaps (quoth Olynda) your Natiuitie was calculated, and ſo the Conſtellation foreſhewing this fall, your father was a wiſe man and preuented the Planets with pollicie: But you told me of three companyons that are fellowe friends with you in your Cottage, what bee they? Three Madame (quoth Barmeniſſa) that while I liued in the Court I heard of, but neuer could be acquainted with: Content without plentie, Quiet without enuy, and Pouertie without impatience: three ſuch companions, that if in extremitie I ſhould miſſe them, in deede I might count my ſelfe rightly to bee miſerable. The Souldan taking no pleaſure in this prattle (for that his old wife was an interlocutor in this Dialogue) haſted away, and Olynda as willing to be gone, tolde the old Princeſſe that if ſhe ſtood in néede (whatſoeuer Ægipt reported) ſhe was not ſo much her enemie but ſhe would ſupplye her want. Barmeniſſa made anſwere, that when her friends fayled her ſhe would come to her for her laſt refuge. Alas, your friends (quoth Olynda) I thinke they bee fewe. Trueth Madame (quoth Barmeniſſa) miſerie alwaies not multitude of friends. *Nullus ad amiſſas ibit amicus opes.* Yet haue I two, my hands and myne eyes, which ſweares not to fayle me till age driues them away perforce: but pleaſe it your Graces to ſtay, I will reueale ſuch a matter as ſhall greatly re-

bound to both your contentments: and then she made manifest the pretence of those Noble men.

Olynda amazed at this sodayne newes (as base mynds are euer fearefull) desired the Souldan that they might hye home, least some treason in that place were intended: for (quoth she) I knowe, whatsoeuer she saies, that Barmenissa was the author of this treacherie, whose life, how long so euer it be, is the continuance of my sorowes. The Souldan whom cõscience began now to sting at the very hart, turned his backe without farewell, and no sooner came at the Court, but caused the Lords that were fauourers of this treason to bee apprehended, who willingly confessed their intended determination, with full resolution either to dye or to performe it. The king, perceiuing their obstinacie, committed them to warde: and now to make proofe of Olyndas patience, he counterfeated a more deeper affection then euer he did, and for confirmation thereof, he gaue her free libertie to make choyce of three things without denyall whatsoeuer she would craue: which Olynda taking kindly, desired this graunt to bee sollemnely giuen before the Peeres of Ægipt: Upon this request the Souldan made Proclamation throughout all his Empyre, that the Nobilitie should within fiftiene daies appeare at Memphis, where then he kept his Court, with notice also that vpon that day the Quiene should freely aske three things of the Souldan without denyall. The Commons greatly grudged at this graunt, and began to mutinie, that a graceless Concubyne should reape such fauours without desart. The olde Empresse, partaker also of this newes, willing to forewarne the Princesse of ambition, determined with her selfe to send her certayne verses, as a caueat for so warie a choyce. Well, leauing her to her Poems: the Nobilitie and many of the Commons at the dated tyme came, where in the Parliament house the Souldan reuealed the cause of their comming: namely, to bee witnesses of his graunt and her demaund. Olynda fearing the worst, caused the King sollemnely to sweare, that he should not reuoke whatsoeuer he had promised. The Souldan taking aduice, made this sollemne protestation, and sware by the God of the Ægiptians,

that

that whatsoeuer he had promised to ꝑ right and lawfull Queene of Ægipt, he would performe. Olynda setling her selfe to vtter her mynd, was interrupted by a messenger that came from Barmenissa with a scrole. The Souldan vnderstanding to what effect it tended, caused it openly to bee read: the contents whereof were the verses following, ouer which was written this lattin sentence.

Tempora mutantur, & nos mutamur in illis.

Aspyring thoughts led Phaeton *amisse,*
Proude Icarus *did fall he soard so hie:*
Seeke not to clymbe with fond Semyramis,
Least Sonne reuenge the fathers iniurie.
Take heede, Ambition is a sugred ill
That fortune layes, presumptuous mynds to spill.

The bitter greefe that frets the quiet minde:
The sting that pricks the froward man to wee
Is Enuie, which in honor seld we finde,
And yet to honor sworne a secret foe.
Learne this of me, enuie not others state,
The fruites of enuie is enuie and hate.

The mistie Clowde that so eclipseth fame,
That gets reward a Chaos of despight,
Is blacke reuenge which euer winneth shame,
A furie vyld thats hatched in the night.
Beware, seeke not reuenge against thy foe,
Least once reuenge thy fortune ouergoe.

These blasing Commets do foreshew mishap,
Let not their flaming lights offend thyne eye
Looke ere thou leape, preuent an afterclap:
These three forewarnd well mayst thou flye.
If now by choyce thou aymest at happie health,
Eschew selfloue, choose for the Commonwealth.

These verses did nothing preuayle with Olynda, although they moued all the rest of the companie to remorce: for esteeming them as shadowes, this was her request: that first the Nobles which conspyred her death might bee executed, the Kings sonne dishinerited by act of Parliament, and the Quéene banished out of all the Soudans dominions: these were her three demaunds: which whē the Emperour had throughly weighed with himself, noting the iniurious mynd of an insolent Concubine, he fell into such hate against her for her presumption, that he burst forth into these tearmes. I see well, as the distressed estate of pouertie is intollerable for want, so the presumption of an insolent person is not to be suffered for pride: thoughtes aboue measure are either cut short by tyme or fortune: they which gaze at a Starre stumble at a stone: the Cimbrians loke so long at the Sunne that they ware blynd: and such as are borne beggars make Maiestie a marke to gaze at: sith that in presuming with Phaeton, they fall with Icarus: and that in desiring with Tarquin to bee counted more then Gods, they proue in the ende with Polycrates to be worse then men. I speake this Olynda, for that I see the glorie of a Crowne hath made thee vnworthie of a Crowne, and Dignitie that ought to metamorphise men into vertuous resolutions, hath made thee a very mirror of vicious affections: could it not suffice thee to depriue the Quéene of her due, I meane of my loue, of her Husband, her Dignitie, her Crowne, her Possessions, but now thou seekest to eryle her, her Countrey, which is dearer to a good mynd then her life? Hath she borne all with patience, & doest thou requite all with enuie? Doth she salue her miserie with content, and canst not thou brook Maiestie in quiet? Is Ambition so furious a foe that it suffers no corriuall? Shall I ioyne vnnaturall actions to disloyaltie? Haue I forsaken the mother, and shall I now dishinerit myne owne Sonne? Shall I bring that curse vppon my selfe to dye without one of myne owne bloud to sit on my Seate? No Olynda, the least of thy requests shall not be fulfilled, a heare shal not fall from the meanest of my Subiects head to satisfie thy reuenge: yet will I keepe myne oath, not to thee, but to the lawfull Quéene of Ægipt,

which

which is Barmeniſſa: for anger is not a ſufficient diuorce: the will of a Prince confirmed by falſe witneſſe is no lawe: the dated tyme of marriage is not miſlike, but death: therefore proude and iniurious Concubyne, (for no better can I tearme thee) I here where without lawe I inueſted thee with dignitie, now in the ſame place according to all lawe depoſe thee from the ſtate of a Quéene, and allot thée the ſame puniſhment which thou didſt requeſt for the Empreſſe: namely, to be baniſhed out of al my Territories, and then to liue in perpetuall exyle. Olynda falling at the knées of the Souldan would haue made replye, but he commaunded her to bee taken out of his preſence, which the Lords performed in all haſte: then he ſent for his wife, and after reconciliation made, to the great ioy of all his Subiects, in liew of her patient obedience ſet her in her former eſtate.

PEnelope hauing finiſhed her tale, Eubula (for that this pleaſant Hiſtorie had brought the old Nurſe on ſleepe) made this anſwer: If Argus (Madame) had bene an Auditor to your good Philoſophie, Mercuries yppe had neuer brought his hundred eyes in ſuch a ſodayne ſlumber: I ſee well ſleepe hath no priuiledge ouer deſire, neither hath tyme any warrant againſt cõtent: for had this bene but the preamble of your diſcourſe, myne eyes had not grudged at ſo long an inſinuation: eſpecially diſcouering ſuch a preſident of womens perfection. I perceiue obedience is a preſent ſalue againſt choller, and that the wife hath no better defenſiue againſt an angry huſband then ſubmiſſion with patience.

I can but ſmile (quoth Vygenia) to ſee that Eubula hath ſuch care of the œconomicall precepts, reſembling Silenus, whoſe talke was euer of Grapes becauſe he loued Wine well: and ſhe harpeth vpon the duetie of a wife as one deſirous of a huſband. And you (quoth Eubula) play like the Lapwing, that cryeth euer fartheſt from her neſt: when Dyana was preſent Caliſto neuer talked of Iupiter, & yet Iuno was ielous ouer the pure virgin: The Veſtals in Rome offer Sacrafice with their hands, not with their eyes. Lucrece had the picture of Venus in her bedchamber, yet ſhe was chaſt. Many talke of Mercurie that neuer

heard his melodie: & diuers landed at Samos that sayled not to Corinth. Tush Vygenia, ỳ discourse of obediẽce is not the discouerie of affection: neither is the talke of a husband the proofe of mariage: but seeling where your own shoe wrings ye, you aime at the straightnesse of my last.

Ismena hearing her fellowes at such prye blowes, told them that how dayntie so euer they made it, their silken throtes would easely digest such packthreede: for (quoth she) I dare sweare the precisest of you both had rather haue a husband thẽ heare of him, seeing your peeres are enough and your mynds not vowed to Minerua.

Penelope could not but smile at the chollericke prattle of her mayds: and yet for that the night was farre spent and her Nurse in a sound sleepe, she toke vp their controuersie, concluding with the opinion of her mayd Ismena, that they had rather follow Iuno to the Temple then Dyana to the Woods: and rather sing with Hymeneus thẽ weepe with Vesta. Well, the mayds whose conscience told them their Mistresse prophesie was truth, agreed to her principles with silence: and Penelope waking her Nurse, mannerly foulding vp her Web went quietly to her rest.

The second nights discourse.

After that the day was come, & the Suitors had filled the stately Pallace of Penelope with their seuerall traynes, the Princesse put on her mourning attyre, which alwaies she was accustomed to weare since the absence of Vlisses: shewing her selfe (as Anciſthenes commaunded) a good wife discontent in her husbands absence, that therby she might both bewray the perfection of her loue, and qualifie the passionate desires of her Suitors: which seeing her daylie busie about her Web, and yet her labour (like Belydes Daughters to powre water into bottomelesse Tubs) endlesse, could not comprehend within the compasse of their imagination what the reason of this should be, seeing so carefully shee indeuoured her selfe to bring her worke to an end. Well, resting in hope that tyme should ease their longing,

ging, they spent the day in sondrie pleasant pastimes and seuerall discourses, til the Sunne declyning to the West, they departed.

Penelope glad of their absence, seeing that Phœbus had lodged himself with Tytan, and Venus the swéete messenger of the silent night appeared in the Skye, accompanyed as before with her Nurse and her mayds, she went to her old taske, vntwisting that in ỹ night, which before she had with great labour wrought in the day. Sitting thus busily at their worke, the olde Nurse (who by the last nights prattle had found the length of Penelopes fote) began to waken them out of their dumps in this maner. I maruel, when I consider with my selfe, that ỹ Romaines who couet to surpasse the Grecians in all honorable & vertuous actions, did not see into their own follies, when they erect Temples vnto Flora, as a Goddesse worthie of deuine Sacrafice, appoynting in honour of her funerall day certaine lasciuious sports and pastimes, called after her name Floralia, she being a most vile and infamous Courtizane, and discrediting the state of their Commonwealth with her incontinencie: and yet grudge to erect an Image in the memorie of Lucrece, that with her inuiolable chastitie, not onely honoured the Romaine vertue, but freed the Cittie from the burthen of a Tyrant. The reason as I gesse (quoth Penelope) is for that the nature of man is so corrupt and addicted to vyce, that what vanitie presents, they stil (be it neuer so bad) keepe it as an obiect to their eyes: but what is vertuously performed they commit to obliuions charge to reward. In déed (quoth Ismena) now I perceiue ỹ my doubt is absolued, which long hath holden me in suspence: for long haue I mused why only in al the whole world Dyana hath a Temple in Ephesus, and Venus is as commonly honored as the household God Lar, that had a corner in euery mans kitchen: for in Paphos, Cypres, Athens, Samos, Rome, and infinite other Cities, her Temples stand in the streates, discouering the erecters deuotions by the costly and sumptuous buildings. And yet (quoth Eubula) the Vestals in Rome, who were dedicated to virginitie, bare Palme aboue the rest: for the Senators apparelled in their Robes of Maiestie, neuer met any of thē in the streate but they gaue them

the wall, and saluted them bare headed: acknowledging for all their Temples of Venus, that the Aulter of Vesta yéelded parfumes more pleasing to the Gods. Wee reade in the Anuals of the Romaines, that Amulia a Vestall mayd caried water to the Temple in a Siue, and when the barke wherein the mightie Image of Peace stuck vpon the sands, that al the force of women could not remoue, yet a Vestall Virgin drew it easely by the Riuer Tybar with her girdle: prouing by this myracle (let vs account it no lesse) that amongst all other vertues, Virginitie is most fauoured of the Gods. So that when at the siege of Troy, the mortalitie and Pestilence rayned amongst the Grecians, the Gods would bee appeased with no Sacrafice but with the prayers of Iphygenia Daughter to Agamemnon. Wee see that the gift of prophesie, which is holden for a certain deuine essence infused into humaine mynds, was particularly bestowed vppon this sexe: for the Sibils were Virgins, and the mayden that gaue answers at Delphus. Well sayd Eubula (quoth Penelope) you run descant vpon this word Virginitie, as though either you deserued to be a Vestall or a Sibill: Yet it may be Madame (quoth Ismena) that were she a Vestall (I had almost said a Virgin) but God forbid I had made such a doubtfull supposition) she might misse in carying water with Amulia in a Siue: for amongst all the rest of the Virgins, wee reade of none but her that wrought such a myracle. Eubula hearing how pleasantly Ismena played with her nose, thought to giue her as great a bone to gnawe on, which she cast in her téeth thus briefly. I remember Ismena, that Epicurus measured euery mans dyet by his own principles, and Abradas the great Macedonian Pirat thought euery one had a letter of mart that bare sayles in ỳ Ocean: none came to knock at Diogenes Tub but he thought him a Cynicke: and fancie a late hath so tyed you in deuotion to Venus, that shortly we shall haue you in that vayne, to thinke there is no such Goddesse as Vesta: but take héede Ismena, tis an heresie, the conceipt whereof once caused as good a Virgin (I will not inferre comparisons, because they are odious) to bring forth Romulus and Remus at a burthen.

Penelope

Penelope hearing her maydes so farre ouershote themselues in her presence, began to frowne, which made them blush, as ashamed they had so farre past the limits of modestie: but she perceiuing by their countenance ẏ they acknowledged their faults, would not (sith they had so womanly taken the checke) procéede any further in giuing the mate, but with a smyling chéere broke out abruptly into these spéeches. You put me in remembrance by your prattle of virginity, of mypromise, how this night I would discusse the precious vertue of Chastitie: which seeing we are so close set at our worke, shal serue this night to preuent imminent slumbers. The old nurse and the maydes giuing attentiue eare, Penelope began in this maner. The wise and learned man Euboides, whose sayings haue euer bene counted as Oracles, was of this opinion, that the greatest vertue in a woman was to bée knowne of none but her husband: alledging to the saying of Argius, that the praise of a woman in a straunge mouth is nothing els but a secret blame: so that Socrates whom Apollo tearmed the wisest man in Greece, affirmed that the greatest fortresse and defence that nature had giuen to a woman for the preseruation of her reputation and honour, was Chastitie: which lost and violated, there remaineth nothing but shame and infamie. Plato being demaunded what Chastitie was, made this description: It is (quoth he) the shield against luxuriousnesse, being such a defensorie against voluptuous desires, that as he which weareth the Bay leafe is priuiledged from the preiudice of Thunder: so that woman which is adorned with Chastitie, is safely armed against all inordinate affections whatsoeuer: insomuch that ẏ eyes (which is a fickle and inconstant sence) delight in the varietie of obiects, yet are brought to be busied about one particuler subiect by the secret vertue of Chastitie. Further, Plato calleth it a preseruer of good will, the rasor of dull thoughts, the corrector of vntamed desires, and an enemie to the disordred will of the Soule: attributing vnto it these qualities, that it suppresseth furie, hindreth dishonest actions, brédeth continencie, mollifieth the harts of tyrants, & vseth reason for a rule in all things: And experience it selfe teacheth vs, that as nothing more doth ruynate fame and

credit

credite then voluptuousnesse, so nothing getteth more honour & glorie then chastitie. The consideration whereof, moued Iulius Cæsar rather to suffer a diuorce, thē an incontinent wife, wishing if Gracchus had liued in his dayes, that he might haue made an exchāge of ẏ Empresse for his chast wife Cornelia, so highly did that Monarch estéeme of that vertue. Chastitie saith Epictetus, is the very faire and redolent blossomes that the trée of true and perfect loue doth afford, yéelding so swéet and fragrant a sauour, that the most vicious and vnbridled husband is reclaymed by the smell of such a deuine perfume. Euripedes entring into the consideration of this vertue, crieth out, as wondring at the excellencie thereof. O how is chastitie to be estéemed, that is the cause of such greate glorie and honour amongest women: for it sheweth the feare she oweth to the Gods, the loue she beareth to her husband, the care she hath of fame, the small desire to inordinate affections, and maketh her of a woman, a very patterne of supernaturall perfection. Hipsicratea being demaunded what was her richest Iewel, answered chastitie, alluding to the opinion of Crates the Philosopher, who was wont to say: that is an ornament that adorneth, and that thing adorneth a woman, which maketh hir more honorable: and this is not done by Iewels of Gold, Emeraults, Precious stones or sumptuous attyre, but by euery thing that causeth her to be accounted honest, wise, humble and chast. The Emperour Aurelius made certayne lawes to inhibite superfluitie of attyre, affirming ẏ such ẏ curiously paint out themselues with frysled lockes, swéete perfumes, and straunge ornaments of pompe (vnlesse nobilitie of birth vrge them to such brauery) make men most dissolute and subiect to folly: especially if such sumptuous shewes bee ayded with a rowling eye and vnchast loke: wheras a wise woman through her honest behauiour and modest contenance, lead as many as cast their eyes vppon her, to a continent reuerence of chastitie. Socrates was wont to say, that when a maried wife holdeth her loking glasse in her hand, she should speake thus to her self, if she be foule: what then should become of me if I were also wicked: and if she bee faire: how shall my beautie be accounted of if I continue wise and honest:

neſſ: for a hard fauoured woman that is renoumed for her chaſtitie, is more honorable then ſhe which is famous for her beautie: The records that ſpeake honorably of the Romane Ladies, tell vs that the wife of a poore Smith méeting the Empreſſe Fauſtina, toke the wall of her in the ſtréetes, whereat the Empreſſe grudging, complayned to the Senat, who ſending for the poore woman, & demaunding of her if ſhe committed the déede, ſhe denied it not, and therefore her Huſband was condemned in a certaine ſumme, vppon which ſentence the woman appealed from the Senate to the Emperour, who aſked what ſhe could ſay for her ſelfe: As much (quoth ſhe) as if thou be iuſt and wiſe may ſuffice. For although I am not ſo honorable as thy wife, yet I am more honeſt, and the Citizens of Rome ought to eſteéme vertue before dignitie: the Emperour vpon this diſcharged the woman of the ſentence: Alexander the great, hauing at the conqueſt of Babylon taken a very welfauoured Ægiptian Lady, a widowe whom for her beautie he did greatly affectionate, at night commaunded one of his Captaynes to bring her to his Tent, which ſhe boldly refuſed, willing him to ſay to the King, that captiuitie was no priuiledge to infringe chaſtitie, and if hee went about to diſhonor her, ſhe would peruert ſuch violence by death: this anſwere retourned to Alexander, hée not onely moderated his deſire, but ſent her his Signet as a warrant of her ſafetie: Portia the wife of Brutus, was told by one of her ſeruants, that certaine Embaſſadors of Samos were come, which were paſſing beautifull and well proportioned men: hould thy peace fole, quoth ſhe, wouldeſt thou haue mée to prepare a poyſon for myne honour by the meanes of myne eye. Cyrus King of Perſia making warres againſt the Sythians, had for his Pryſe of the triumphe a very faire woman called Panther, who being the wife of Abradatas his enemy, being deſired of Cyrus for his concubine, ſhe told him that ſhe was chaſt, the King little reſpecting this ſhort anſwere, demaunded a further reſolution, why quoth Panther? can there be any other anſwere that is not comprehended in this word, chaſtitie: hereby noting that the Antydote againſt the enuenomed thoughtes of mens alluring intiſements, and the ſureſt corroſiue

to rote out such vnbridled desires as draw them to inordinate affection is this pretious Jewell of chastitie, the which the more to confirme, I wil rehearse vnto you a pleasant historie which happened not long since within our dominions of Ithaca.

Penelopes second tale.

IN this Countrey of Ithaca not long since, there dwelled a noble man called Calamus, of parentage honorable, as allied to the blood Royall: of possessions rich, as one of the greatest reuenewes in all the countrey: but therewithall so wedded to the vayne suppose of pleasure and delight, that his frends sorrowed at the course of his vnbridled follies, & his poore tennants groned not vnder the burdē of his couetous desires, but were tared with the greeke of his voluptuous appetite, for such was the incontinencie of his life, as satietie of wantō affections neuer glutted his mind with content: But as the Serpent Hidaspis, the more he drinketh, the more he is a thirst, and as ẏ Salamander, the more he lyeth in the fire, the more desirous he is of the flame, so Calamus, the more he offended in this intemperate concupiscence, the more his thoughts were addicted to ẏ vice, so as al his neighbors did wish hee might fall headlong into the Center of some deepe misfortune. Wallowing thus in the selfe conceipt of his wickednesse, on a day as he rode on hunting with certaine of his gentlemen, he stumbled by chaunce on a farmers house, whether as he roade to taste a cup of their smal wine, for ẏ the wether was hot, where he espied a woman homely attired, of modest coūtenance, her face importing both loue and grauitie, who seeing the Noble man approch, dying her christall cheekes with a vermillyon hue, after humble salutations brought him in a countrie Cruse such drinke as their Cottage did afford. Calamus narrowly marking the proportion of this country huswife, courteously toke his leaue & departed, but the sparkes of lust that had kindled a flame of desire in his fancie, perplexed his mynde with sundrie passions: For calling to mind not onely her exterior beautie, adorned with sundrie and seuerall graces, but also her inward perfection,

bewraying

bewaying that she was both wise and honest, he fell into this consideration with himselfe: For shame (Calamus) let not thy thoughts wander in a labirinth to be endlesse: Seeing the flower of thy youth hath bene spent in vyce, let the fruite of thyne age onely sauour of vertue: if the Gods had not the firstlings of thy yeares, yet let them haue thy gray head in pawne of a Sacrifice: tyme is a retrayte from vanitie and vyce: thy foote is stepping to the graue, & opportunitie bids thee take hold of repentance. Venus is printed without wrinckles, as signifying she is the Goddesse of youth: what of this, fond fole, suppose thou wert young, shalt thou therfore wallow in intemperancie? Doe not the Gods forbid thee to craue that ỳ is another mãs due? Are not voluptuous desires to bee suppressed as well in the young eyon as in the old tree? Is thy fancie so fickle as euery face must be vewed with affection? Fond man, thinke this that the poore man maketh as great account of his wife, as the greatest Monarch in the world doth of an Empresse: that honestie harbors aswone in a Cottage, as in the Court: that their mynds oppressed with want, are freed from the vanities of loue. Then Calamus, cease from these friuolous suppositiõs, and seeke not so much as in thought to offer wrõg to so modest a womã, whose honest behauiour forshewes that as she is poore, so she is chast, and holdeth as deare the price of her fame as the state of her life. No doubt Calamus, thou art become a holy Prelate, that hast so many precepts to refell that thou hast alwaies followed: Is not loue a Lord as well amongst Beggars as Kings? Can not Cupid aswone hit a Shepheards hooke as a Scepter? Doth not pouertie by a natural insight yeeld to the desires of Nobilitie? Are womens faces alwaies Kalenders of trueth? or are their lookes (as Ouid affirmeth) euer mindglasses? No, the thoughts of women hang not alwaies in their eyes: dissimulation is sister to Ianus, and wanton appetite oft ietteth vnder the Maske of Chastitie: Hast thou hetherto not bene repulsed with any resolute denyals, and shalt thou now bee ouerthrowne with a looke? No, forward Calamus in thy purpose, triumph man and say as Cæsar did in his Conquests, veni, vidi, vici: The Noble man resting vpon this wicked resolution,

met by chaunce the husband of the wife comming from plough: who seeing Calamus, did his duetie in most humble maner, yet hating him for that he knewe he was vicious: but he thinking to take opportunitie at the rebound, thought now he had a very good meanes to know the disposition of the woman and her husbands name, that he might make repayre thether to prosecute his wicked purpose. He began therefore to inquire of the man where he dwelt: The poore Farmer that, calling to mynd hee had a faire wife, was not willing to tell the place of his abode, made answere vppon the forrest side. What is he (quoth Calamus) that dwels at yonder grange place (for they were yet in viewe of the house) of what wealth, whose Tenaunt: and if thou canst (quoth he) goe so farre, tell mée what your neighbours say of his fayre wife. The man who was amazed at this question, suspecting that which in déede proued true, though his apparel was simple, yet hauing a subtile wit made him this answere. The man my Lord is poore, but honest, his name Lestio, a Farmer by profession, and your Tenaunt in Copy hold: loued of his neighbours, for that he neither enuieth his superiours, nor grudgeth at his equalles: fauoured of the Gods, in ỳ amidst his pouertie he hath a contented mynd, and a wife that is beautifull, wise and honest: whose life my Lord is so vertuous, that our countrey wiues take her actions as a president, wherby to gouerne their fame & credit: insomuch that she is not so much praised for her beautie, as shée is reuerenced for her chastitie. Calamus contented wt this replye roade his way, and the poore man in a dumpe went home to his wife, to whome hee reuealed the effect of Calamus demaund: she willing her husband to repose his wonted trust in her good behauiour, quieted his mynd with the hope of her constancie: but the like rest happened not their Landlord: for he incensed by the praises of her vertues, fel into such a restlesse Chaos of confused passions, that he could take no rest till ỳ night was passed in broken slumbers: the next morning taking Loue only for his guide, he went to the Farmers house, where finding her with one of her maydes in the midst of her huswifery, he stood a pretie while taking a view of her exquisite perfectiõ, till at the last ỳ good wife espyed

spyed him, (who nothing dismaied with his presence, for that being forewarned she was forearmed) gaue him after her homely fashion a Countrey welcome: The Noble man sat downe, and finding some talke, for that now he knewe she was his Tenant, began to talke of her Lease and other matters, that by a long insinuation he might the better fall to his purpose. The poore woman whose name was Cratyna, was as busie as a Bée to set before Calamus such Countrey iunckets as the Plough affords, & made fewe answers, till at last her Landlord after he had tasted of her delicates, taking her by the hand framed his speech in this maner. Tenant (for so I thinke I may best tearme thee) I will not make a long haruest for a small crop, nor goe about to pull a Hercules shoo on Achilles foote: Orations are needlesse where necessitie forceth, and the shortest preamble is best where loue puts in his plea: therefore omitting all friuolous prattle, knowe that as well at the sight of thy beautie, as by the report of thyne honestie, affection hath so fettered me in the snares of fancie, that for my best refuge I am come to thy sweete selfe to craue a salue for those passions ẏ no other can appease. I denye not but thou hast both loue and lawe to withhold thee from this perswasion, and yet wee knowe women haue their seuerall friends: Venus though she loues with one eye, yet she can looke with the other. Cupid is neuer so vnprouided but he hath two Arrowes of one temper: offences are not measured by the proportion but by the secretie: si non caste tamen caute: if not chastly yet charely: thou mayst both winne a friend and preserue thy fame, yea Tenaunt, such a friend whose countenance shall shroude thee from enuie, and whose plentie shall free thee from penurie. I will not stand longer vpon this poynt, let it suffice that in louing me thou shalt reape predestinẽt, & in denying my suite purchase to thy husband and thy self such a hatefull enemie, as to requite thy denyall will seeke to preiudice thee with al mishap, nunc vtrum horum mauis accipe.

Cratyna, who knewe the length of his arrowe by the bent of his bowe (resolued rather to taste of any miserie, then for lucre to make shipwracke of her chastitie) returned him this sharpe and

short answer. In deede my Lord, a lesse harvest might have served for so bad corne, that how warely so ever you gleane it, will scarce proue worth the reaping: true it is, that preambles are friuolous that perswade men to such follies: and therfore had your honour spared this speech, your credite had bene the more and your labour lesse: if vpon the sodaine my beautie hath inueagled you, (for as for my vertue you hazard but a suppose, sith oftimes report hath a blister on her tongue) I must nedes blame your eye that is bleared with euery obiect, and accuse such a mynd as suffereth honour to bee suppressed with affection: and my Lord, sone ripe sone rotten: hot loue is sone cold: the fancies of men are like fire in strawe, that flameth in a minut and ceasseth in a moment: but to returne you a denyall with your owne obiection, trueth it is that I am tyed to my husband both by loue and law: which to violate, both the Gods and nature forbids me, vnlesse by death: Venus may loue and looke how she list, and at last proue her selfe but a wanton: her inordinat affections are no presidents whereby to direct myne actions: and where as you say, offences are measured by the secrecie, I answer, that euery thing is transparent to the sight of the Gods, their deuine eyes pearce into the heart and the thoughts, and they measure not reuenge by dignitie, but by iustice: for preferment, knowe my Lord there is no greater riches then content, nor no greater honour then quiet: I esteeme more of fame then of gold, and rather chose to dye chast then liue rich: threatnings are final perswasions, and little is her honestie that preferreth life before credit. Therfore, may it please your honour, this is my determined resolution, which take from me as an Oracle, that as preferment shall neuer perswade me to be vnchast, so death shall neuer diswade me from being honest.

Calamus hearing this rough replye of his Tenant, was driuen into a marueilous choller, so that scarce affording her a farewell he flung out of the doores, and going to horse he hyed home to the Court. The goodwife glad that he toke the matter so in snuffe, commaunded her mayde to say nothing to her maister, least it should any thing disquiet his mynd. But Calamus who was impatient of this denyall, thought that the Cittie which

would

would not yéeld at the parlie, might be conquered by an assault, and that which intreatie could not commaund, force would constrayne: therefore seeing her husband had no lease of his house, but was a Tenant at wil, he commaunded his Steward, whom he made priuie to his practise, to giue him warning: but with this prouiso, that if his wife were found tractable, then he should remayne there still. The Steward fulfilling his Lords command, proued straight by experience, that it was as possible to force the streame against his course, or the earth to ascend from his Center, as to drawe her mynd from vertue and honestie: and therfore contrary to al lawe and conscience depriued them of their liuing. The poore man, after his wife had made him priuie to the cause of their sodayn calamitie, toke it very patiently, and chose rather to liue poorely content, then richly discretited: so that the prefixed tyme of his departure being come, hee quietly parted from the Farme to a Cottage, where his wife and he liued as perfect Louers in vnfayned affection.

Calamus seeing this pollicie toke small effect, impatient still in his restlesse passions, accompanyed one day with fiue or sixe of his men, taking the aduauntage of the tyme, parforce brought Cratyna away to his Pallace, and priuilie left two of his men in Ambush to kil Lestio. The neighbours hearing of this mischief, secretly sent to Lestio where he was at plough, & forwarned him of all that Calamus had done and intended. The poore man seeing that to striue with him was to shoote against the Heauens, preferring life before wealth, euen as he was apparelled went farre from the place of his residence, and as a man in distresse seeking seruice went to a Collyar who intertayned and gaue him such wages as he deserued, where quietly, although disquieted in mynd for the absence of his wife, he past a fewe daies. Diuers were poore Lestios thoughts: for when hée considered the chastitie of his wife, suspition hid her face for shame: but when he sawe that womens thoughts are aspyring and gape after preferment, and that the greatest assault to honestie is honor, he began to frowne: so that thus betwéene dread and hope he liued disquieted. But poore Cratyna whose miserie was redoubled by

hearing

hearing of her Husbands mishap, powred out such continuall fountaynes of teares, as not only Calamus, but al men toke pittie of her playnts. But the vnbridled furie of lust, that while it runs headlong into a laberinth of mischieues, feeleth no remorce, had no consideration of her daylie sorowes, but resolued, if not by intreatie, at least by force to come to the end of his lasciuious desire. Which resolution being knowne to Cratyna: from prayers she went to pollicie, and therefore on the sodayne became more courteous, desiring Calamus that he would giue her some space to forget her olde loue and intertaine a newe choyce: He whose fancie was somewhat appeased with this good speech, graunted her the tearme of a moneth with free libertie to walke in the garden and els where at her pleasure. Cratyna enioying her wish so fortunatly, taking tyme by the forehead, early in a morning stole secretly from the Pallace and fled into the Countrey, where in the day tyme hyding her amongst bushes, and in the night traueling as fast as she could, at last she came to the place where her husband was with the Collyar: & there chaunging her apparell into the attyre of a man, and her head brauely shorne, she became a handsome stripling: The next day comming to the Colepits she demaunded seruice. The maister Collyar seeing the youth well faced had pittie of his want, and intertayned him: and for that Lestio his man wanted one to driue his Cart, he appoynted Cratyna to attend vpon him: She thanking the Gods that blest her with so fauourable a seruice, was brought to the sight of Lestio and committed to his charge. Lestio pittying the poore estate of such a young youth, noting narrowly the lyniaments of her face, fell into sighes, and from sighes to teares, for the remembrance of his sweete Cratyna: who in deede pittying her husbands playnts, in that she was a true deuiner of his thoughts, could not (as womens secrets oft hang at the tip of their tungs) but bewray to her husband what she was: who when he perfectly knewe his wife so straungely metamorphosed, what for ioye of her presence, and sorrowe that Fortune had made them both thus vnhappie, he fell into deeper complaynts, till appeased by his wife, they went merely to their worke.

But

But Calamus missing Cratyna, and after diligent search perceiuing she was stole away, fel into such a melancholick humour, that his seruants thought him half in a frenzie: He commaunded horse to be made out into euery hye way, al passages to be stopt, euery womã to be examined, but in vayne: which so increased his furie, that taking his horse he roade vp and downe the Countrey as one halfe mad, but found not that which he sought for: at last, Fortune enuying the happinesse of Lestio and his wife, brought him where the Collyars were at worke, and a pretie space before hée came at the pit hée met Cratyna: who seeing Calamus, although he had disguysed himselfe, because he would ride vnknowen, yet perfectly perceiued what he was, and therefore would willingly haue bene out of his companie: but he called vnto her, and she hauing her lether Coate all dustie, and her sweete face al be smeared with coales, was the bolder to goe, and demaunded of him what he wanted: Calamus inquired if such a woman past not that way: Yes mary (quoth Cratyna) there past such a one in deede, who as she reported fled from Calamus, for that the Noble man would haue reft her of her chastitie. Canst thou tell my friend (quoth he) whether she is gone: and if I could (quoth Cratyna) thinke not so little courtesie in me as to bewray her: for by thy straight inquirie I perceiue thou art seruant to that dishonorable Calamus, that spareth neither wife nor widdowe to satisfie his vnbridled lust. Calamus not brooking these hard spæches alighted from his horse, thinking to haue wel bumbasted the boy: who as fast as he could fled to the Colepit. The Collyars séeing their boy (whom for his good behauiour they al generally loued) to be misused by a seruingman, toke their whips in their hands and demaunded of Calamus what he ment to offer vyolence to any of their companie: for that (quoth he) the boy hath greatly abused me. Cratyna told thẽ al the whole matter: which knowne, the Collyars wisht him if he were well to be packing. Calamus seeing amongst such an vnruly companie he could not mend him selfe, went his way with a flea in his eare: and as he roade, perceiued where Lestio lay a sleepe, who was not so disguysed but he knewe him perfectly: therefore thinking when he did wake to

learne some thing out of him, & so turning his horse into a close hard by, rested himselfe behind a bush: Long he had not sitten before Cratyna came merely whistling with her Cart, and told her husband all what had happened, who both smyled that the Noble man had such rough intertaynment, as also that she was so cleane out of fauour. Calamus who ouerheard them, and perceiued that the youth whom he toke for a stripling was Cratyna the poore mans wife, felt such a remorce in his conscience for offering violence to so vertuous and chast a mynd, that assone as they were gone he posted as fast as he could to the Court, where Menon the Grandfather of my Lord Vlisses then raigned as Prince, and reuealed vnto him the whole matter: who greatly pleased with the discourse, desirous to see so honest a wife, presently dispatcht a Pursuant to commaund the Collyar to bring his man Lestio and his boy before the King. The Pursuant sparing no horsesflesh, came so fast from the Court that he found them all at dinner: who after they heard his message, were amazed, especially poore Cratyna, who feared some new misfortune: yet cheering her self, the better to comfort her husband, they met with the Pursuant to the Court: where being brought before Menon and Calamus, he there complayned of the Collyar how he had abused him in mayntayning his boy to giue him ill language. The Collyar (as a man amazed) confessed his fault, but vnwittingly, for that he knew him not: and therefore desired Calamus to bee his good Lord and maister. Menon, who all this while had his eye on Cratyna, asked her what he was: May it please your Grace (quoth she) I am seruant to this man who is owner of the pit, but vnder this other who is ouerseer of my work: So then (quoth the King) you serue two maisters, the one by day, the other by night: Nay my Liege (quoth Cratyna) but one maister, for we make smal account of any seruice that is done in the night. How say you sirha (quoth the King to Lestio) is not this boy your man: No my Lord (quoth he) only my bedfellowe, and that is all the seruice I craue at his hands. At this answere the King and Calamus smyled, and Cratyna fearing she was discouered began to blush: which Menon perceyuing, demaun-

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ded of her of what age she was: About eighteene my liege (quoth she) Menon willing to trye then what the euent would be: tolde the Collyar that he and his man, for that their faults were throwe ignorance, might get them home: but for your boy (quoth the King) seeing he is so young and well faced I meane to make him my page. The Collyar was glad he was so dispatcht, but poore Lestio through abounduance of griefe was almost driuen into an extasie, so ỳ chaunging colour he could scarce stand on his legges: which Cratyna perceiuing, seeing now Fortune had done her worst, resolued to suffer all miseries whatsoeuer, fell downe vpõ her knees, and vnfoulded to the King what she was, and from point to point discoursed what had happened betweene her and Calamus, intermedling her speeches with such a fountaine of teares, as the King pittying her playnts, willed her to be of good cheere: for none in all his Kingdome should offer her any violence. Calamus in the behalfe of Cratyna thanked the King, with promise before his highnesse that the vertuous and chast disposition of her mynd had made such a metamorphosis of his former thoughts, that not onely he was content to bridle his affections, but to indow her with such sufficient lands and possessions, as might very wel maintayne her in the state of a Gentlewoman. The King praysing Calamus for his good mynd, willing to be an actor in this Comedie, commaunded his Steward to furnish them with apparell, and afterward to conuay them to Calamus Pallace, where they liued long after in prosperous and happie estate.

The tale was long and the night was too farre spent to runne any further descant on so good a playne song, and therefore Penelope hauing finished her taske went to her lodging.

The third nights discourse.

The day no sooner appeared, but according vnto their ould custome, the noble men of Ithaca repaired to the Pallace of Penelope, who fayning her self not wel, kept her Chãber, which her sonne Telemachus espying, caried ỳ Lords with him

on hunting, so that that day they past away in the field in chase of such wild beasts as fortune by chaunce offred them as game: supping with Telemachus after their disport at a grange house three myles distant from Ithaca, they had no sooner taken their repast, but euery man hied home to his owne house, and Telemachus posted as fast as he could to his mother, whome he found at supper with her Nourse, where he discoursed vnto her how they had spent ẏ day in hunters pastime, with euery accident ẏ happened in the chaze. Penelope had no sooner supt, but taking custome for a lawe, she left her Sonne with one or two of his companions in the dyning chamber, and accompanied with her Nourse, and her Maydes went to her worke: where falling to their wonted taske, sith the last night they had a checke for their ouer much prattle, they held themselues silent.

The old Nurse smiling at this new custome, began to breake out of this dumpe in this maner. Your mayds (Madame) seeme by their silence to make a challenge of your promise, I meane to heare your discourse of silence: resembling herein Phillips page, who in his maisters Tent being sore a thirst durst not craue drinke, but subtelly sat singing ouer the pot. You say wel Nurse (quoth Penelope) I promised it, and now I will performe it: but before I enter into the description of silence, tell me what is your opinion of my yesternights tale. Mary Madame (quoth the Nurse) that both the method and matter were of one temper, for both I liked the tale for the good speeches, and the poore mans wife for her great honestie, who by the constancie of her mynd, not only preserued her good fame, but reclaymed the Noble man frō his voluptuous appetite: so that the instance grewe very wel to your former prin iple: no vertue to be greater in a woman thē Chastitie. Now Nurse (quoth Penelope) that I haue heard your opinion, to the discouerie of silence. Demaratus an Embassadour of Corinth, being demāded of Olimpias Philips wife how the Ladies of his Countrey behaued themselues: answered they were silent, comprehending vnder this word all other vertues: as though ẏ woman which were moderate in speech could also moderate her affections. Plato calleth women that are bablers

lers théeues of tyme: And Plutarke compareth them to emptie veſſels, which giue a greater ſound then they which are full: ſo that wanting inward vertues to beautifie the mynd, they ſéeke to winne praiſe by outward prattle.

It ſéemeth (ſaith Bias) that Nature by fortefying the tongue, would teach how precious and neceſſarie a vertue ſilence is: for ſhe hath placed before it the Bulwarke of the teeth, that if it will not obey reaſon, which being within ought to ſerue in ſteade of a bridle to ſtay it from preuēting the thoughts, we might reſtraine and chaſtice ſuch impudent babling by byting. And therfore, ſaith he, we haue two eyes and two eares, that thereby we may learne to heare & ſee much more then is ſpoken. A woman, ſaith Cherillus, that ſeeketh to encreaſe her honour and fame, firſt ought to practiſe ſilence, then to indeuour how to talke: for the one is naturall, the other a vertue got by vertuous education. Phocion hearing an Noble woman of Athens vſe much talke, at a banquet, which ſhe ſet forth in many eloquent phraſes, and being demaunded of one how he liked her ſpéech: My friend (quoth he) her words may be compared to Cipres trees that are great and tall, but beare no fruite worth any thing. Portia the wife of Brutus hearing a poore woman vſe much talke in her preſence, called her aſide and gaue her money to holde her peace, being aſhamed that any woman ſhould be accuſed of babling. The Embaſſadours of Carthage being ſent to Scipio, who being newly departed from Rome, were notwithſtanding ſumptuouſly intertayned by his wife, who ſitting a whole ſuppertyme without vttering any worde, being demaunded of the Carthaginians what newes they ſhould carrie to Haniball: tell him (quoth ſhe) ꝑ Scipio hath a wife that knoweth how to be ſilent. Cæſar the mightie Monarch of the world was wont to ſay, that ſilence vſed in due tyme and place was a profound wiſedome, a ſober and modeſt thing and full of deepe ſecrets. Words (ſayth Mœnander) hath wings, and are preſently diſperſed euery where, and many repent that they haue ſpokē, but neuer that they hold their peace. The Cittie of Athens was deſtroyed by Silla the Romaine Dictator, who by his eſpyals, was admoniſhed of the prattling

of certaine women washing of their cloathes, where they talked of a certaine place in the Towne that was weake and worst defended. Many inconueniences grow of the intemperancie of the tongue, as dissention and strife in a house, whereas contrarywise nothing more appeaseth choller nor sheweth modestie then silence. To confirme the which, I will rehearse a pleasant and delightfull Historie.

Penelopes third Tale.

THe Historiographers whose Anual Records makes mention of that auncient Cittie of Delphos, where Apollo deliuered his Oracles, sets downe as chronicled for truth, that sometyme there raigned as chief and gouernour of the Cittie one Ariamenes, a Prince, wise, as seated in a place where the meanest inhabitaunt was able to discourse of wisedome: rich, as indewed with such and so large possessions that all his bordring neighbours were inferiour to him in wealth and reuenewes: and fortunate, for that he had three Sonnes honourable, as discended from such parentage, and vertuous, as sauouring of their fathers prudent education. Ariamenes blest thus euery way with earthly fauours, seeing his gray heares were sommons vnto death, and that olde age the true limiter of tyme, presented vnto him the figure of his mortalitie, that he was come from the Cradle to the Crouch, and from the Crouch had one legge in the graue: knowing that the kingdome of Delphos was not a Monarchie that fell by inheritaunce, but that he might as well appoynt his youngest sonne successor as his eldest, being affected to them all alike: was perplexed with contrary passions, to which of the three he should bequeath such a Royall Legacie, sith by such an equall proportion Fortune had inriched them with fauours. Nature, who is little partiall in such peculiare iudgements, was by the seuerall thoughts that troubled Ariamenes head, almost set at an non plus: insomuch that the olde King driuen into a Dylemma, fell into this consideration.

That all his sonnes were married to women descended from honorable

honourable parents, and that sith his Sonnes were so equall in their vertues, he was to measure his affection by the conditions of their wiues: for he knew that Kings in their gouernment proued oft such Iusticiaries as ẏ good or ill disposition of their wiues did afford: for the greatest Monarches haue bene subiect to the plausible perswasions of women, and Princes thoughts are oft tyed to the wings of beautie. The Emperour Commodus had neuer bene so hated in Rome for his tyrannies, had he not bene pricked forward to such wickednesse by his wife. Marcus Aurelius the true & perfect president of a Prince, confessed, that hardly he could withstand the allurements of Faustina. The enuie of a woman hangs in the brow of her husband, and for the reuenge of an enemie she passeth not for the losse of a frend. These things considered, Ariamenes was thus resolued for himselfe, to bestowe the kingdome on that sonne whose wife was found to bee most vertuous. Therefore after this determined resolution hee presently dispatched messengers to his Sonnes in their seuerall Prouinces, that they particularly accompanied with their wiues should meete him at Delphos, with general commaund also that his Nobilitie should make hastie repayre to that Cittie. The Kings commaund being put in execution, his Sonnes to signifie their duetiful obedience, sped them to the Court, where being come before their father, Ariamenes after he had sit a while in a muse with himselfe, fell into these speeches.

Nature (Sonnes) the perfect mistresse of affections tyeth the father to his children with such a strickt league, that loue admitteth no partialitie, nor fancie broketh any difference, but a iust proportion of good will is ministred if the parties haue equalitie in their vertues. Marcus Portius Cato who was a father of many children, was wont to say, that the loue of a father as it was Royall, so it ought to be impartiall, neither declyning to the one nor to ẏ other, but as deedes doe merite. Elius Tubero who had sixteene children of his owne bodie, at his death made equall distribution both of goods & lands alike to them all: and being demaunded why he did not giue his eldest Sonne the greater portion, made this answer. And is not the youngest also the sonne

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of Tubero. This I speake for that age telling me that nature of force will claime her due, and that many yéeres as Harbingers prouides me my long home, being father to you all, and equally affected, sith no difference of birth, but of vertues makes exception, willing to leaue one to sit in my seate that may gouerne the Monarchie and Kingdome of Delphos, and vnwilling to displace any, if Lordship would breake any fellowship: Perplexed thus with a cumbat betweéne nature and necessitie, I haue thus resolued to please all, that seeing you are maried, and a vertuous wife is a great stay to a Prince, before the Nobles & Commons of Delphos here present, I ordaine that which of you can proue your wife to be most vertuous ỳ same shal succeede in my Kingdome: therefore let me heare what euery one can say for himself.

Ariamenes strooke a great maze into his Sonnes mynds at this speech: yet for that obedience willed them to thinke their fathers censure inuiolable, with free consent they committed their haps to him that is the best bestower of vertues, and the eldest began to say for his wife in this maner.

Though right mightie Soueraine and father your will hath abridged me of that which nature hath giuen me without exception: yet holding your command for a constraynt, and your word for a lawe, knowing that the thoughts of Princes ought to bee peremptorie, I meane not to aime at the Crowne vnder the title of birthright, but by the president of my wiues vertues. Thus much therefore can I say for my self: that if the true felicitie wherof Aristotle talketh in his Ethickes, might be bounded or limited within the compasse of mariage, that (were the Peripatetion aliue) he would set me downe as a perticuler instance of his happinesse. For, to begin with the gifts of nature, the eye, the perfect Iudge of colours, is able to testifie that she is most beautifull, so graced with exteriour fauours, as well in the proportion of her bodie, as in the perfect lyniaments of her face, that hard it were for enuie to denye her the superioritie. For the gifts of the mynd indewed with sondrie good parts and most excellent and rare vertues, so that it is in question whether Nature or education hath shewed the greater cunning: wise, obedient, duetifull and chast,

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as fame is able (blowne in euery mans eare) to manifeſt: for the gifts of fortune, deſcended of honourable parentage: rich, as the Dowrie giuẽ at the mariage day can witneſſe, and not barraine: ſo that by allowing her the ſucceſſion, your Highneſſe is ſure to be ſeene in your poſteritie as in a glaſſe. But: As the eldeſt was readie to goe forward in his demonſtratiue kind of declayming, his wife feeling alreadie in conceipt what a ſugred obiect ẏ ſight of a Crowne were, burſt forth on the ſodayn into theſe ſpæches.

My huſband (may it pleaſe your Highneſſe) hath made a long inſinuation intermedled with a friuolous diuiſion of nature and Fortune, whereas the playnſong being true nædeth not ſuch a Muſicall deſcant: for ſir, ſeeing the matter ſtandeth vpon vertue, the Touchſtone your Highnes hath appoynted to try our titles: I referre my ſelf to thoſe whom fame hath made to glorie in my weldoings: and ſeeing the deſire of a Crowne may proue my huſbands plea partiall, I my ſelfe haue ſtept in, referring my cauſe to the generall report of the world, both for obedience and chaſtitie, the two ſpeciall ornaments that gardeth and preſerueth a womans honour: I will not inueigh againſt the vertuous diſpoſition of my ſiſters, ſith enuie in a woman is like a pibble ſtone ſet in the pureſt gold. But thus much.

And as ſhe was readie to goe forward, grudging at this ſelfe conceipt, her ſecond ſiſter taking the matter in ſnuffe, and ſtaring too earneſtly at the hope of a Crowne, forgat her ſelf and fel into theſe chollerick paſſions.

Siſter, what nædeth ſo long a harueſt to ſo ſmall a crop: dallie how you liſt, Hercules ſhee will neuer ſerue a childes foote: ſelfeloue is no vertue: they which wore the Garlands in Olympus, were forbidden to be at the breaking downe of the Lawrell: and the foliſh conceipt Nyobe had in her ſelfe was her owne ouerthrowe. They which praiſe themſelues are like to the Peacock, that glorying in the beautie of her gliſtring plumes, no ſooner lookes at her feete but ſhe lets downe her feathers. Ill beſeemes it a Gretian Dame, eſpecially of Delphos, to be Heralt of her owne actions: but his Maieſtie may thinke the playntife hath ſmall friends, when he himſelfe is fayne to play the Aduo-

cate. To auoyde which ſuppoſition, you referre his Highneſſe to the generall fame of the Countrey, that aboue the reſt you exceede in obedience and chaſtitie: Take heede Siſter, fame hath two faces, and in that reſembleth tyme, readie as well to backbyte as to flatter: therefore they which build their vertue vppon report, doe alledge but a bad proofe. But leauing your reaſons to his Highneſſe conſideration, thus for my ſelfe. I ſet not my good name at ſo ſmall a price, as to hazard it vpon the chaunce of the tongue, that of all other members is moſt vncertayne: although I am ſure my bordring neighbours ſo eſteeme of my doings, as they take my vertues for a preſident of their actions: but I hope your Highneſſe doth conſider ẏ ſuch tree ſuch fruit, that the liuely pourtraiture of the parents is as in a Chriſtall manifeſted in the children: that nature is the beſt touchſtone of life: that education and nurture are as good as the Chriſocoll to diſcerne Minerals: ſo they of maners. Then right mightie Prince, I firſt for proofe of my vertuous diſpoſition lay downe the honorable and happie life of my Parents ſo well ordred, that fame and enuie bluſheth to ſtayne them with any ſpot of infamie: what care they had to bring me vp in my youth, with what inſtructions they paſſed ouer my tender yeeres, I referre to your Maieſtie, as by willing your ſecond ſonne to match in ſo meane a famelie: ſince the rites of mariage were celebrated my huſbands depoſition ſhall manifeſt. The eldeſt Siſter hearing how cunningly and yet crookedly this pretie Orratreſſe aimed at ẏ matter, could not ſuffer to heare ſo long a tale without replye, and therefore went thus roundly to the purpoſe.

Siſter, ill might Phillis haue blamed Dydo for her folly ſith ſhe her ſelfe intertayned ſtragling Demophon for a friend: The Cynicks that inueighed againſt other mens faults were ſeldome culpable in the ſame crymne: they which will haue their cenſures peremptorie, muſt not build their reaſons on vncertaine principles: therefore wipe your noſe on your owne ſleeue, and if you eye where my ſhoe wrings me, looke to the length of your own laſt: for in obiecting ſelfeloue to me you fall a ſleepe in the ſweete conceipt of your owne praiſe: which in deede wiſely you frame to

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hazard on the chaunce of fame, sith your deserts are so small as report is blind on that side which lookes to your vertues: the force of your reasons drawen from the authoritie of propagation, alledging nature and nurture for prookes of your vertues, are too light to counterpaise with a Crowne: for we oft see that Natures only error is found in the dissimilitude of image: so that the tree bringing forth fayre blossomes, yet the blomes may either bee nipped in the bud with untimely weather, or hindred with Caterpillers, that it neuer proue good and perfect fruite. The Cedar tree is fayre of it selfe, but the fruite either none or very bad: Tis no opinion to say a good father a good child, in that tyme oft maketh an alteration of Nature. But your husband was commanded to haue pleaded your interest: marie I feare his conscience tels him the Crowne hangs too hye for his reach, sith he must be fayne to attayne to it by your vertues.

The youngest Sister hearing how vnreuerently they babled before the King, began to blush: which Ariamenes espying, noting in her face the very portraicture of vertue, demaunded of her why hearing her Sisters so bard by the eares for a Crowne she sayd nothing: her answere was thus briefe and pithie. He that gaineth a Crowne getteth care, is it not follie then to hunt after losse. The King loking for a longer discourse, and seeing contrarie to his expectation that she was onely short and sweete, prosecuted still in questioning, and demaunded what vertues she had that might deserue so royal a benefice. This (quoth she) that whē others talke, yet being a woman I can hold my peace. Ariamenes and all the Nobilitie of Delphos wondred at the modestie of the young Ladie, that contrarie to her naturall disposition could so well bridle her affections: Therefore debating the matter betwixt them which of the three were most vertuous: although they found by proofe that the other Ladies were both obedient and chast: yet for that they wanted silence, which (sayd Ariamenes) comprehended in it all other vertues, they mist of the cushion, and the King created his youngest Sonne heire apparant to the Kingdome.

PEnelope hauing ended her tale, the old Nurſe greatly commended the diſcourſe, and becauſe ſhe would be pleaſant at the parting blowe, knowing that Iſmena was a quick wench of her tongue, told her that this tale was a good preſident for her to direct her courſe, ſeeing ſilence was ſo profitable. Tuſh (quoth Iſmena) feare not you Madame: for when I haue ſuch a proffer as a Crowne, I will gaze ſo faſt at that, that I will forget my prattle: but in faith my lippes are too courſe for ſuch Lettice, and ſo hye hangs the Grapes that the Fore will eate none. Well Madame, I knowe your meaning, but for all the cracke my peney may be good ſiluer, ſith ſilence is a vertue amongſt women: but yet I ſee no reaſon of neceſſitie, ſeeing nature hath bene ſo niggardly in that fauour. It may ſeeme (quoth the Nurſe) that ſhe hath bene rather too prodigall, for thy tongue wants no mettall. As thus they were about to part with theſe merrie quips, a meſſenger came haſtely ruſhing in, who tolde Penelope that Vliſſes was arryued that night within the port of Ithaca: This word ſo amazed them all with ſodaine ioye, that leauing the endleſſe Web, Penelope called for her Sonne, and that night ſent him poſt to the Sea: where what newes he heard of his father I knowe not. But thus abruptly this night was the diſcourſe broken of: but for that fell out after his home comming, I referre you to the Paraphraſe, which ſhortly ſhalbe ſet out vppon Homers Odiſſea: till when let vs leaue Penelope attending the returne either of her huſband, her ſonne, or of both.

FINIS.